# RINGING REALITIES

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# Ringing Realities

*A Restatement of*

*Some Abiding Truths*

*by*

OSCAR L. JOSEPH, Litt.D.

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# *Preface*

EVERY movement has passed through the stages of hostility, understanding, and acceptance. Christianity was at first opposed, then it was understood, and finally it was given a place in the activities of mankind. It is again passing through this trying ordeal. This is not to be regretted, for genuine criticism implies critical appreciation.

Christianity has changed in its expressions and in its outlooks during the centuries, but it still remains essentially the life that is hid with Christ in God. Its developments have magnified the revelation of the divine grace and given proof that it is competent to meet the manifold needs of our complex life. They who know it best by verification in personal experience are persuaded that the next renaissance of the spiritual life will reckon more fully with its Gospel for all life and for all of life.

Adjustments must needs be made in the interest of a division of labor. These call for the

dismissal or partial employment of some factors which were regarded as indispensable, and for the introduction of other factors which were considered negligible. We cannot shirk unpleasant features nor should we mistake assertion for argument. If the results are to be satisfactory, we must have patience and a keen sense of the rational and spiritual fitness of things.

This is the spirit in which I have tried to understand and to interpret some abiding truths, in the light of the new knowledge and the new experience, assured that those things which are shaken give evidence of the validity of what stands unshaken.

O. L. J.

*Christmas Eve, 1927*

# Contents


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Preface | vii |
| I. | Values and Valuations | 1 |
| II. | The Available God | 19 |
| III. | The Sufficient Christ | 40 |
| IV. | The Widening Horizon | 60 |
| V. | Sight and Insight | 80 |
| VI. | The Shining Ray | 99 |
| VII. | The Supreme Constraint | 121 |
| VIII. | The Choral Strain | 142 |
| IX. | The Dynamic Experience | 164 |
| X. | The Community of Fellowship | 185 |
| XI. | The Manifold Book | 210 |
| XII. | The More Abundant Life | 233 |

# RINGING REALITIES

# *Chapter I: Values and Valuations*

EACH age has its own estimate of what is supremely indispensable. This is determined by its conscious needs with due regard to the ideals and experiences of previous times. The illusion of finality has always been an attractive talking point. But it has constrained utterances which later days have called in question for the sake of a more adequate correlation of old and new facts. This recognition of the continuity of thought implies that the differences between the past and the present have to do largely with interpretation and emphasis.

We need the synoptic and synthetic mind which is at once creative and unifying. It maintains the balance between extremes. It discerns the permanent in the passing. It discriminates between relative values and stresses what is urgently imperative. It reckons with "the Spirit of the Whole" and appreciates the indissoluble unity in life with all of its changes and varieties. A single track is woefully insufficient for the heavy traffic.

But unless there is wise supervision, the mere multiplication of tracks will not prevent the roads from being cluttered by miscellaneous travelers, each one a law unto himself. Those who have the right of way, by pressure of urgent demands, may thus be compelled to wait and the delay may jeopardize their mission. Just as the fire engine and the ambulance van are given precedence on our crowded avenues, so there are certain values in life which make a mandatory appeal because they deal with the stern realities and deep necessities that call for immediate attention.

The terms "values" and "valuations" suggest the materialistic standards of the world of commerce. Their usage in the moral and religious sphere refers to the appreciation of benefits, privileges, blessings, and the responsibilities that go with their possession. These values may be differently appraised, but their significance has received equally serious attention from every age. They may be summed up by the three words, Goodness, Truth, Beauty, which refer to qualities that consistently make an incisive and impelling appeal to us. Goodness refers to the character of love which finds expression in exemplary conduct. Truth has to do with the light of knowledge that dispels the darkness of fear and its

endless progeny. Beauty is concerned with life and its expansions through controlled pleasure in nature and art.

In a deep sense these three are closely related. They cannot be separated without disastrous consequences. When Goodness which relates to willing is exclusively emphasized, you have the stern voluntarist, who goes to Puritanic extremes and gives no quarter to any except to those of his own way of strenuous behavior. When Truth which is connected with thinking becomes an ardent and animated pursuit, you have the cold intellectualist, who makes reason the only bar of judgment, regardless of other considerations. When Beauty which is influenced by feeling insists that the emotions must be primarily satisfied, you have the impulsive emotionalist with his erratic practices. The Reformation of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries illustrates some of the errors of isolated Goodness. The Rationalism of the eighteenth century shows the barrenness of unrelated Truth. The Renaissance of the fifteenth century witnesses to the follies of self-centered Beauty.

The inconsistencies, the confusions, the desecrations of our own day clearly prove that we have yet to learn that these absolute and ideal values

need to be unified in view of the wholeness of life. Why indulge in vaporous generalizations when the bill of credit must be paid by us? Why allow our conventionalism to camouflage our refusal to face the urgent issues that demand attention? Why permit considerations of practical caution to prevent the honest expression of our vital convictions? This attitude of hesitation and evasion makes us one-sided, due to our inadequate background. Such one-sidedness largely explains the mistakes and blunders of conscientious people. It also enables us to understand why some confuse prejudices with judgment; why others fail to recognize that the frontiers of knowledge are constantly advancing; why others suppose that the rational is opposed to the spiritual; why still others draw wrong conclusions because their facts are out of focus. Jesus emphasized the imperious necessity to will through, to think through, to feel through. This is what he meant when he said: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." [1]

Here, then, is the difference between the open mind which has regard for the whole situation,

[1] Luke 10:27.

and the closed mind which is satisfied with only a part of the situation. Far better than either is the discerning mind which knows how to estimate values and to relate them in a coherent whole. Thus only can we avoid the bane of "adult infantilism," which Dr. Joseph Collins declares is "our chief deficiency as a people, our most conspicuous national shortcoming." [2]

The solution is found in the idealism of Jesus Christ. He was silent on many questions of social, political, and theological interest, which would inevitably receive different answers according to the intellectual, ethical, and spiritual climate of each age. He stressed inclusive principles which were permanently valid and capable of versatile applications. When he said: "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God," he announced a principle of momentous consequence. Lesser values were not thereby depreciated or repudiated, but considered according to the scale of relative merit with bearings on the whole of life.

What is the Kingdom of God? It is an *ideal* which makes clear the supremacy of God everywhere, and insists that He must be reckoned with in all our affairs. It is an *influence* which imparts a sense of the realized presence of God in

[2] Collins, *The Doctor Looks at Love and Life*, p. 108 (Doran).

the communion of life. It is a *spirit* giving motive and power to make a loyal surrender to God. It is an *inspiration* which furnishes vital energy, to create a social order making for righteousness, not of a few but of many and ultimately of all. The Kingdom of God is not an imperialism of force but of faith. It is superior to nationalistic barriers and unlike any watered cosmopolitanism. It is the Good Will of considerate comprehension which welcomes into a generous fraternity all souls animated by the passion for justice, the fervor of grace and the practice of mercy.

Jesus set forth its principles in the Sermon on the Mount, which might be summarized as love to God and love to man. Such love is competent to redeem every condition and to solve every problem throughout the bounds of human habitation. Jesus expounded the progress of this Kingdom in parables of lucid charm and in words of memorable import, which declared that, in spite of interruption and distraction, it was bound to advance and expand, and finally bring every state of life under its captivating control. He committed its propagation to his followers. Their constant prayer, "Thy Kingdom come," was not to be a pious wish, but a strenuous endeavor to realize its achievement on a world-wide scale.

The term "the kingdom of heaven," used almost wholly by St. Matthew, refers to the experience of holiness and happiness. This is the equivalent of "eternal life" mentioned by St. John. The other term, "the kingdom of God," found largely in St. Mark and St. Luke, enforces the idea that this experience is associated with the definite consciousness of God's reality and regnancy. What is this but a declaration that character is the distinctive quality? It is not a matter of wealth, but of well-being. In the Beatitudes Jesus congratulated those who *are* worthy by reason of their God-likeness because they inevitably *do* what advertises their filial and fraternal spirit.

Where this superb value is accepted, the valuations of life are impartial and charitable. Differences of opinion are judged by their ability to reflect the opulent ideal of Christlike catholicity. We have been largely dominated by a provincial outlook. The militaristic imperialism of Rome, the aristocratic intellectualism of Greece, and the energetic commercialism of Tyre represent three of the controlling motives of civilization, which down to our own day have stirred the imagination, won the plaudits and secured the allegiance of the nations. But they have proved to be ineffectual in giving purity and peace to mankind.

Why not give a fair trial to the program of Jesus? Instead of shirking the issue with verbal quibbles about the enterprise being hazardous, let us come out of the caves of compromise and begin to practice what we have vainly professed.

There are obvious obstacles in the way. The filibustering of politicians, the empty gestures of diplomats, the glittering proposals of commercial magnates and industrial demagogues, the dogmatizing of ecclesiastics, conspire to postpone a frank reckoning with the proposals of Jesus. What gives it such opalescent distinction is the fact that it appeals in a luminous and liberal way to every class and condition. This ideal of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man was creatively realized by Jesus Christ. Its practicability has been occasionally demonstrated. The time is now ripe for Christians, as individuals and as communities, to show the courage of consecration and consistency by a whole-hearted acceptance of this compelling ideal. It, moreover, represents the highest values so suggestively enunciated by Augustine: "Thou seemest to thyself rich, and if thou hast not God, what hast thou; thy neighbor seems poor, but if he has God, what has he not?"

Jesus offered a new point of view which gave the best perspective of life's manifold relation-

ships. To be sure, the individual must come first; but his genuine gains are conserved and multiplied only as he is related to the larger circle of society. The attractions of asceticism and of monasticism are wholly foreign to his teachings. The religious spirit, as he understood it, was positive rather than negative, persuasive not dictatorial; and it was expressed in terms of a winsome morality and spirituality. The self-inclosed type of religion with its ascetic bias and ritual demands was supplanted by a humanized religion which operated for an all-round righteousness. Fanaticism is due to defective insight. Conscientious souls, who have zeal without knowledge, have thus unwittingly caricatured the sanity and sanctity of religion. The superiority of a discernment which sees straight without a squint, was fittingly advanced by Jesus when he said: "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." [3]

Absorption in the trivial and the transitory is our threatening peril. We become immured in details, like the woman in Ibsen's play, who cared only for her dolls, and we lose sight of the larger issues which the new knowledge, the new experience, the new duties call for serious attention. Let us disown that species of provincialism which

[3] Matt. 6:22.

thinks in terms of the village and not of the city, of the nation and not of the world. The rural outlook is hopelessly inadequate because it places the local in the foreground. It paralyzes the powers of discernment, and the prejudices of conceit and of self-complacent superiority do violence to the sanctity of personality. The better way is not found in individualism which magnifies the one at the cost of many; or in socialism which exalts the many regardless of the one; or in patriotism which insists on devotion to country often in scornful defiance of justice and truth; or in internationalism which surrenders the life and traditions of one nation into the hands of a group of diplomats. The more acceptable method provides for personal independence on the basis of self-respect and of the recognition of the rights and responsibilities of others. This is the scale of values and of valuations so suggestively advocated by Jesus in his teaching on the Kingdom of God.

We do not have to originate or to exaggerate in order to find out what is decisively important. Its intrinsic excellence is clearly set forth in the New Testament, which has been well described as "the Book for humanity." We need to interpret anew its final verdicts and apply them searchingly and fearlessly to our complex situation. The drab se-

quel which followed the Armistice has led us to forget some of the idealisms manifested during the World War. Our values and valuations were then largely determined by the exigencies of the conflict. We learned that there were things of greater consequence than even life itself. We understood that the words of Satan, in the Book of Job, express the sentiments of insane selfishness and betray the spirit of the slacker and the coward. It has never been true that "all that a man hath will he give for his life." Liberty, justice, truth, love, are the noble virtues of self-respect, and without them life is divested of rectitude, dignity and glory. The crass futility of divided loyalties also came home to us, in view of the unavoidable demands which summoned us to do the one thing needful. St. Paul knew the exacting hardships of warfare when he reminded Timothy that, "no soldier gets entangled in civil pursuits; his aim is to satisfy his commander." [4] He is not a "victim of miscellany," with many irons in the fire but not one ready to be hammered into shape. He alienates himself from everything that interferes with the prompt prosecution of his duty. What was true of the soldiers at the Front was equally true of those in the backline trenches,

[4] II Tim. 2:4 (Moffatt's translation).

and of those engaged in the varied activities in the homeland on behalf of this imperative enterprise.

This note of urgent devotion to the Kingdom of God was repeatedly heard in the startling sentences of Jesus. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent press into it."[5] This greatest benefaction is here compared to a city attacked by besiegers who capture it at any cost. It is a picturesque way of describing the intense zeal and passionate earnestness of those who eagerly desire it and are intent on possessing it. This is the logical test of fidelity to the entrancing interests of God's kingdom. Loyalty has often regarded conventionality as a form of stupidity, and precedents have been discarded when the situation called for initiative and adventure. This was true of the valiant reformers, the intrepid pioneers, the faithful missionaries of the Cross. It is assuredly the primary condition of perfection in any walk of life. What the artist foregoes for the cultivation of his art, what the scholar gives up for the light of learning, what the patriot sacrifices at the call of his country, illustrates the type of dangerous living which should distinguish the Christian in his eager concern for the glory of God.

The Epistle to the Hebrews presents a galaxy

[5] Matt. 11:12.

of faithful men and women, who braved opposition, endured persecution and suffered the martyrdom of death. Their faith in the values of spiritual realities enabled them to see beneath the surface shows of things and to accept the challenge to perform heroic exploits for God and man. This list of alert and buoyant souls can be indefinitely extended from the annals of every nation. Their appeal to us is to continue and complete what they began. Our methods are to be determined by our particular needs, but our motives should have the courageous purposefulness, the unfailing hopefulness, the genuine faithfulness which have always been the marks of souls with a sense of mission. It is intensity that distinguishes the genius from the ordinary man. While only a few attain the sublime heights, it is possible for everyone to increase the range and to sharpen the keenness of his religious experience. Our judgments of values are the outgrowth of experiences. In the last analysis, "criticism succeeds creation" in every realm of thought and action. Indeed, this is the principle whereby familiar truths are seen with greater vividness. Were this better understood, controversy over differences would be obviated, and the deeper unities that inhere in genuine values would be more generally appreciated. Contro-

versy invariably induces partisanship with the nervous strife for triumph more than truth. Inquiry, on the other hand, proceeds from what has been verified to what yet remains to be discovered. Here it is that the genius shows the characteristic intensity of patience, as he endeavors to relate differing interpretations for the sake of a creative synthesis of old and new values.[6]

Religion has been described as "faith in the conservation of values." It holds that not one good shall be destroyed, for directly or by the transformation of its inner qualities, it contributes to the enrichment of the sum total of values in their coherent wholeness. This is the assurance that discounts the negations of the cynic "who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing." He has the marketplace mind which makes more of the Stock Exchange quotations than of the dividends earned by spiritual experience. He is a stranger to "Reason in her most exalted mood," and he regards with querulous skepticism the reality of what Wordsworth in "Tintern Abbey," refers to in haunting lines as:

> "A presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,

[6] *Cf.* R. F. A. Hoernlé, *Idealism as a Philosophy*, pp. 134, 314.

Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things."

The undeveloped resources of the Church await the arrival of a leadership of discernment and discrimination, marked by deep understanding and large sympathy. "The world is looking for guidance, but the guide must be one who has the courage to discard what is obsolete and the insight to create what is new." [7] Canon Streeter is right in thus stating the case. Such guidance will moreover make demands, in the name of the Regnant Christ, upon every sphere of life, without the bias of partisanship or the bane of one-sidedness. And it cannot fail to secure a response because the appeal reckons with the whole gamut of human life, from the tantalizing regions of the subconscious up to the triumphant realms of the completely conscious in the living God.

Many of our facile explanations are really evasions which postpone the day of settlement. They recall Sancho Panza's proverb, "Fine words butter no parsnips." Satisfactory conclusions are to be

[7] B. H. Streeter (Editor), *The Spirit*, p. 367 (Macmillan).

reached after patiently obtaining extensive and exhaustive evidence from first-hand sources. Some facts precipitate the gloom of pessimism and other facts flash the blinding brightness of optimism. The better way is that of meliorism which takes note of all the facts and sees the whole of life, the sordid and the sublime, the evil and the good, not merely in their contrasts but in those gracious processes where the morally repulsive is redeemed by the spiritually attractive. It furthermore lays no claims to the exclusive monopoly of truth, which reflects the arrogance of men and of institutions, obsessed by the conceits of egoism, and disguising their uncertainty of tenure by the sinister campaigns of conscription. The meliorist, moreover, does not follow free lances, whose torches go out just when light is most needed; nor does he resort to expediency which virtually sacrifices the priority of principle. "True idealism does not deny the realities but illuminates them." Its viewpoint enables us to face the facts of evil and of good with the fairness of candor, the passion for thoroughness, the poise of calm, determined that we shall take no shelter in threadbare panaceas nor be content until we have a solution which does justice to the whole of life in all its manifold actions, reactions and interactions.

The call is for reconsideration for the sake of restatement and of reorganization. Have we the courage of faith to brave every risk? Have we the abandon of sacrifice to witness to the truth even to the subversion of cherished but incomplete conceptions? Have we the clearness of conviction to take the initiative? We need neither a new gospel nor an old gospel but the Eternal Gospel. It must, however, be given a setting that reckons with present needs. All values and valuations will then be appreciated and accepted in accordance with the truly catholic spirit of the Apostle Paul, expressed in the comprehensive exhortation: "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." [8]

For Further Reading

Edgar S. Brightman: *Religious Values* (The Abingdon Press).

R. F. Alfred Hoernlé: *Idealism as a Philosophy* (George H. Doran Company).

B. H. Streeter: *Reality*. A New Correlation of Science and Religion (The Macmillan Company).

[8] Phil. 4:8.

J. S. MacKenzie: *Ultimate Values* (George H. Doran Company).

John H. Randall: *The Making of the Modern Mind* (Houghton Mifflin Company).

Will Durant: *The Story of Philosophy* (Simon and Schuster).

F. H. Bradley: *Ethical Studies,* Second Edition (Oxford University Press).

C. K. Ogden and I. A. Richards: *The Meaning of Meaning* (Harcourt, Brace & Company).

# *Chapter II: The Available God*

THE history of religion witnesses to the travail pains of man at his best. The search for ultimate reality has been along devious and perilous ways, but the trying journey has brought satisfaction to man according to the state of his mental and moral capacity. Whatever interpretation may be given of the soul's peace at the end of its tedious quest, it is generally agreed that religion is not an invention but an inspiration. It continues to be the most fecund influence for the unifying of human life. It is so woven into the warp and woof of things that man cannot be understood apart from religion.

How amazing is the record of the progress of religion! *The Golden Bough* by Sir James G. Frazer is an impressive recital of the age-long quest which includes hazardous struggles, bloody sacrifices, torturous privations, torturing practices. To the sympathetic imagination these exhibitions are evidences, not of heartless brutality and of barbaric selfishness, but of the persistent pursuit of

mankind for fellowship with the eternal. They justify the thesis of Professor W. P. Paterson that religion is "an optimism whose foundations are laid in pessimism." In a large sense religion is essentially one. It is the elemental impulse and the passionate yearning of man towards God, by whatever name He may be called. But historically there are many religions, and they are to be judged not as true or false but as perfect or imperfect, according to the basic ideas of God. However crude and even repulsive these ideas may seem to us, they express what men have regarded as the highest values. They are thus to be accepted as stages in the religious development of the human race.

Consider, for instance, the progressive conception of God in the Old Testament. There was a steady advance in the ideas of God: first, as a tribal deity, then as a national God, and, finally, as the God of all nations. The earliest stage was that of polytheism which believed in the existence of many gods. This was succeeded by henotheism, according to which each nation exalted its own gods without necessarily disparaging the gods of others. Thus the Hebrews showed honor to Jehovah, the Philistines to Baal, the Moabites to Moloch. Then there came the monotheism of

the prophets of Israel of the eighth and later centuries, B. C. Their teaching emphatically announced the sovereignty and supremacy of the creative God of righteousness. In comparison with Him, Osiris of the Egyptians, Asshur of the Assyrians, Marduk of the Babylonians, were nothing but phantoms of the decadent imagination.

The last word concerning God is found in the New Testament. It came with Christ's revelation of the divine Fatherhood expressed in terms of redemption. God ceased to be an abstract Deity, shrouded in mystery and enshrined in the august aloofness of His holiness. He became known as an animated Personality concerned in the well-being of all people and providing for their numerous necessities. We are charmed by the surprise of wonder, the joyousness of hope, the exhilaration of faith, the bounty of love, the marvel of grace in Jesus' thought of God. It was an overwhelming revelation of the intense reality, the vivid unity, the vital sanctity of the Father-God.

What Jesus gave was a vision of God, which satisfied the intellect, comforted the heart, quickened the will, and enriched the life of man. He was more interested in the character of God than in the being of God. Questions of metaphysical speculation have to be reopened and answered by

every generation according to its prevailing theories. But the supreme question of life and destiny has to be considered in accordance with the range of religious experience. In emphasizing the practice of the presence of God, Jesus virtually offered the most profound philosophy of God. His teaching penetrated to ultimate reality with convincing certainty, and it gave a conclusive reading of the enigma of life. It confirmed the experience of God as a besetting power, an ensphering influence, a moral stimulus, a spiritual passion.

Explanations of God's dealings with the universe can never satisfy all our intellectual demands, since we are not in possession of all the requisite data. Formal arguments have seldom brought certainty on the profoundest issues. Science has become remarkably efficient in its own sphere of quantitative measurements. It has been described as "the grammar or anatomy of the universe." But the language of the universe, its prose and poetry, is given by religion, which imparts a personal and valuational experience as it affects the individual and society. This experience, moreover, is neither static nor final. It is a vitalizing process of communion with God, enriched by developing conceptions of Him, which reach their

climax in the unveiled vision of Christ that God shall be all in all. This is the spiritual idealism which regards the physical universe as the training ground where, by the experiences of discipline and of deliverance, man is fitted for partnership with the Eternal. The divine immanence means that God is near us in our struggles and activities. The divine transcendence teaches that He is beyond us and incites in us the desire to reach the higher and the highest levels of divine perfection.

Consider some of the interpretations of these truths. Pantheism stresses the divine immanence so exclusively that it is impossible to distinguish God from Nature, and it weakens the dignity of human personality. Deism magnifies the divine transcendence so as to separate God from Nature and place Him in an exalted Olympus, from which He views the panorama of life with an unconcern that may mean indifference or inability. Neither of these views does justice to the whole truth that God is compassionate and considerate, impartial and equitable, severe and sympathetic, possessed of sovereign power which is always at the disposal of what furthers the interests of holiness and goodness. Christian theism, on the other hand, relates the natural to the supernatural, the mundane order to the supramundane. It con-

ceives of God as truly personal, holding the universe in the hollow of His hand and not immersed in it, directing its diversified movements with the superior energy of wise control, and accomplishing the divine purpose of redemption without interrupting or disturbing its cumulative continuity. Such a God cannot be exploited, but rather constrains our worshipful coöperation. He cannot be used according to our desires regardless of our deserts. He is not a God of convenience, to get us out of the dilemmas of life without reference to the inevitable claims of duty.

Jesus democratized the idea of God when he called him "Our Father." He implied that a coercive religion or an emergency religion is a caricature. A careful distinction between the divine and the human factors enables us to place the onus of responsibility where it belongs. Many of the misfortunes and disasters that have overtaken the human race resulted from the culpable short-sightedness or cupidity of mankind. They cannot by any process of reasoning be ascribed to the All-Father. The fact is that man's failures were God's opportunity in Providence to introduce the redemptive movement into human history, which was brought to completion by Jesus Christ. In the light of the Cross, we understand the con-

sistent purpose of God to raise mankind into the higher fellowship of divine-human unity. This is what Principal P. T. Forsyth meant by "the cruciality of the cross." It sets forth the puissant principle that has governed the noblest personalities of history, who will be remembered long after the ominous procession of the men of mere might has passed into oblivion.

"Few things are easier," said Cardinal Newman, "than to use the name of God and mean nothing by it." The chief thing is not to use the name of God, but to experience the fact of God. This depends on our understanding of the character of God. To be sure, our conceptions are largely determined by contemporary thought, and we interpret God on the analogy of what is noblest in our own experience. Jesus adopted this principle and appealed from the well known to the little known. "What man is there of you, who if his son shall ask him for a loaf, will give him a stone? . . . How much more shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"[1] The pagan thought of God as one like unto his own king, who, even though a despot, was his highest type of manhood. The god of the Greeks was the Absolute dwelling apart from

[1] Matt. 7:9 ff.

men in the severe solitude of self-contained superiority. The God of the Old Testament showed mercy and judgment, and the note of the divine sympathy was expressed with mellowness in the prophetic word: "In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them."[2] The New Testament revelation, however, gives the most thorough-going conception of God. His grace is consistent with justice; His mercy harmonizes with holiness; His forbearance rightly discerns human blunders; His patience is the quality of dynamic righteousness; His love is a virtue of insight and not a sentimental passion.

This distinctively Christian view of God is well interpreted by three Gifford Lecturers. The secret of Christianity is also the open secret of the universe. Professor Pringle-Pattison states it as his conclusion in these words: "No God, no Absolute, existing in solitary bliss and perfection, but a God who lives in the perpetual giving of himself, who shares the life of his finite creatures, bearing in and with them the whole burden of their finitude, their sinful wanderings and sorrows, and the suffering without which they cannot be made perfect. . . . The divine omnipotence consists in the all-compelling power of goodness

[2] Isa. 63:9.

and love to enlighten the grossest darkness and to melt the hardest heart. 'We needs must love the highest when we see it.' It is of the essence of the divine prerogative to seek no other means of triumph—as, indeed, a real triumph is possible on no other terms. And thus, for a metaphysic which has emancipated itself from physical categories, the ultimate conception of God is not that of a pre-existent Creator but, as it is for religion, that of the eternal Redeemer of the world. This perpetual process is the very life of God, in which, besides the effort and the pain He tastes, we must believe, the joy of victory won."[3] Earl Balfour is no less explicit. He does not think of God as an Identity in which all differences vanish, or a Unity which includes but does not transcend the differences. He accepts "a God whom men can love, a God to whom men can pray, who takes sides, who has purposes and preferences, whose attributes, howsoever conceived, leave unimpaired the possibility of a personal relation between himself and those whom He has created."[4] Sir Henry Jones declares that "God is man's refuge from himself. He is strength as against his own weakness; purity as against his own poverty; and, in

[3] A. Seth Pringle-Pattison, *The Idea of God*, p. 411 f (Oxford University Press).

[4] A. J. Balfour, *Theism and Humanism*, p. 36 (Doran).

a word, perfection as against his own imperfection."[5] Such a God has unlimited power and love. In spite of delays in the fulfilment of the divine purpose, due to the human contingencies of ignorance and iniquity, the final outcome shall be "to the praise of the glory of his grace."[6] Browning has repeatedly given definite expression to this faith, and nowhere better than in the triumphant confession of "Abt Vogler":

"There shall never be one lost good! What was, shall live as before;
The evil is null, is naught, is silence implying sound;
What was good shall be good, with, for evil, so much good more;
On the earth the broken arcs; in the heaven a perfect round.

All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good shall exist;
Not its semblance, but itself; no beauty, nor good, nor power
Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives for the melodist
When eternity affirms the conception of an hour."

The perennial problem of suffering and pain ceases to be quite so baffling, when we think of God, not as a spectator of human anguish but as a participator, Who helps us to bear our grief and dismay with courage. Life is not a struggle for

[5] Henry Jones, *A Faith that Enquires*, p. 177 (Macmillan).
[6] Eph. 1:6.

existence but for excellence. Indeed, the elect souls of every generation accepted suffering as inevitable, and they were perfected in strength by its harrowing but purifying experiences. Many unfortunate experiences might have been avoided; but constituted as we are, misjudgments of error and maladjustments have not been wholly due to moral perversity but to unavoidable limitations. And yet good has come out of the evil. Some historical illustrations might clarify this issue. The Fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. routed the Christians from their isolated self-complacency, and liberated the spiritual forces of the Gospel for a more extended service. The Fall of Rome in 410 A.D. compelled the Church to reëxamine and to reinstate its Faith. The Fall of Constantinople in 1453 led to the spread of Greek learning in Western Europe, which resulted in the Renaissance and later in the Protestant Reformation. The Fall of Great Britain's power in the Western World, and the Declaration of American Independence in 1776 established the Republic of the United States. The Fall of the Bourbon dynasty, and the French Revolution in 1789 focused attention on the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity. The fall of empires and the shaking of nations in 1914 are of too recent occurrence for a

satisfactory estimate. But who can deny that the spirit of self-determination has awakened in the breast of all peoples? Who can predict the outcome in "manners, virtue, freedom, power"? Who can ignore the historical fact, in view of subsequent events, that these upheavals have been used by a wise Providence to further the welfare of mankind? What has taken place in the past justifies our belief that similar benefits will come out of the loss, despair, and affliction of our own times.

What is true of nations holds in proportionate measure with regard to individuals. Pain and suffering lie in the pathway of progress, on which adventurous spirits have traveled. They expected no guarantee of immunity from affliction which may be merited or otherwise. Nor did they meet trials with resentment or with fatalistic resignation, as though they were scapegoats. They repudiated the mechanistic view of a universe of random forces, and accepted the theistic conception of a universal moral control inspired by Supreme Love. They were assured that oppositions would finally be subjugated and things finally end right. And so they might have said with Browning's "Rabbi Ben Ezra":

"Then, welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness rough,

Each sting that bids nor stand nor sit but go!
Be our joy three parts pain!
Strive, and hold cheap the strain;
Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never grudge the throe!"

There is another side to this question. "Pain is the shadow thrown by the black form of evil." The assertion that God is the author of evil violates our sense of eternal values and undermines the dignity of personality. The Gnostic dualism between matter and spirit, the Alexandrian variant of this dualism between flesh and spirit, and the Greek theory that sin originated in ignorance are equally fallacious. They have a defective grasp on personal relationships as the real sphere of ethical action. The superiority of the Biblical conception lies in locating the origin and guilt of sin in the human will. It is a revolt against conscience, a transgression of the law of God, a failure to conform to the divine purpose of holy love. Modern views, which regard evil as an illusion or as a necessary element in the development of good, fail to reckon with the staggering fact of man's greater proneness to evil than to good. Nor do they frankly acknowledge the significant fact, testified by human experience, that the divine control of the human will has strengthened man to turn from the evil to the good and attain a spiritual character

through the obedience of fellowship with God. The results of evil are caused by the insensate selfishness, heartless cruelty, and demonic debauchery of criminal souls. When the laws of health and honor are violated, there follows the terrific harvest of disease, desolation, and death in multiplied forms of disaster. God is surely no partner to these fell conspiracies. And it is irrational to inquire why He did not prevent the fatal consequences which really endorsed the impregnable character of the divine principles of justice and truth. It is absurd to suppose that God should interpose in any arbitrary or capricious fashion after the arrow had left the bow. But He does draw nigh to heal the sore distresses, which have come in the wake of the culpable defiances and desecrations of the eternal law of righteousness.

This divine approach is what is meant as the truth of the struggling and trying God. It tells of the patient and persistent travail of God in creation and redemption. The disappointment and failure are due to self-imposed limitations that have regard for the initiative and independence of the human will. The struggle of God in the trying processes is on our behalf, to lead our erring feet into the light. Instead of leaving us to our own devices and resources, He waits to impart the

wealth of the divine grace whenever we penitently seek Him. But He has been repeatedly defeated. The cry of passionate distress is poignantly voiced in the exclamation of Jesus: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"[7] The prophet of the exile dimly understood this pregnant truth, when he declared: "In all their affliction he was afflicted."

It found lucid and complete expression in the Incarnation and Atonement of Jesus Christ. He subjected himself to human limitations and assumed the burden and bane of sin that through sacrifice even unto death, he might bring us unto God, in the communion of filial faith and fraternal loyalty. Herein was disclosed the wonder of the infinite and sacrificial love of God. We make no pretense to unravel this great mystery in all its aspects. It has, however, been verified as a refreshing reality by thousands of earnest souls, who have entered into the experience of divine forgiveness when their passion of penitence responded to God's passion of pardon. Such an experience, moreover, is not a moral sedative, but the most efficient stimulus to the highest forms

[7] Matt. 23:37.

of altruistic service. Professor H. R. Mackintosh forcibly states this truth: "We search in vain for any inducement to right living, which is comparable to the liberating and inspiring sense that the Father in mercy has taken us into his personal communion and let us see in Christ that we have unrestricted access to himself." [8]

How different this is to the Absolute of philosophy, subsisting in an endless calm, undisturbed by the sins, sorrows, and struggles of mankind! How unlike the Abstract of theology, whose attributes are discussed by scholastic theorists without any relation to the realities of life! How contrary to a despot God Whose autocratic will is imperially imposed upon his abject worshipers, who are compelled to submit to the divine mandates without any regard for their own moral responsibility! How opposed to the idea of a tribal or national God, Whose influence is circumscribed by racial and other provincial considerations! How alien to the notion of an ecclesiastical God, Who is to be approached by the due and ancient forms of a static ceremonial, operated exclusively by priestly functionaries! Such conceptions obscure the wholesome truth of the God of grace, Who is su-

[8] Mackintosh, *The Christian Experience of Forgiveness*, p. 267 (Harpers).

perior to the bias of partiality, the bane of favoritisn, the error of prejudice. He does not inflict the indignities of snobbery or the humiliations of exploitation upon any individuals or groups because they belong to backward races. He rather treats all men with the purpose of an unlimited love and exercises over all providential concern, moral discipline, and spiritual redemption.

> "For the love of God is broader
> Than the measure of man's mind;
> And the heart of the Eternal
> Is most wonderfully kind."

The creedal conceptions of God are definite, but people who accept them in a conventional way are often vague in their ideas of God. A deacon once described God as representing to him "a kind of an oblong burr." Another acknowledged that, "Ordinarily the image of God is gray and formless." A third said, "So far as I know myself I have three reasons for believing in God: the light in some people's eyes, the sense of honor, and the joy which follows complete surrender to a cause that is greater than self."[9] However vague and incoherent, these are testimonies from experience, and doubtless give some measure of satisfaction to

[9] *Cf.* J. B. Pratt: *The Religious Consciousness*, p. 200 ff (Macmillan).

the devout motions of the soul. A writer has recently pointed out that in all the hurly-burly of our modern life, we need God most of all. "The world has always needed him, no doubt. But it seems as if the America of to-day needed him most because it is so complacently satisfied to get along without him. Oh, we have churches enough, priests enough, charities and good works enough, or at any rate abounding. But they all seem ingeniously contrived to cover the void. For divers reasons, God seems to have drifted far away from most of us, or we from him, so far that neither airplane nor wireless will suffice to call him back." [10]

There is a way by which He can be brought back to us and we to Him. It is the way of the New Testament, which consistently and impressively declares that God is like Christ. In the words of St. Paul, Christ is "the likeness of the unseen God," that is, "the portrait of the invisible God." [11] As Bishop McConnell puts it: "The believer in a Christlike God beholds in Christ a climax, a theme, a motive, a spirit which gives him God in his deepest nature. In other words, God is in Christ as he is not elsewhere—as revela-

[10] Gamaliel Bradford: *D. L. Moody. A Worker in Souls*, p. 15 f (Doran).

[11] Col. 1:15.

tion of spirit and character." Again he remarks: "God's ways are not our ways indeed, but if they are Christ's ways, we can be content." [12] This faith in the Christlikeness of God does not in the least imply, as H. G. Wells insists, that, "After all the real God of the Christians is Christ, not God Almighty." It rather means that Christ unveiled God in the fulness of His gracious sympathy and in the opulence of His redeeming power. Well might it be said that "The key to the riddle of the world is God, the key to the riddle of God is Christ."

This is the Available God Who is within the range of our comprehension and experience. And yet there are unfathomable and inexhaustible resources in the riches of His grace, to constrain the grateful exultation of the Apostle: "How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out!" [13] Such has been the experience of the martyrs, seers, and saints of Christianity. They were emboldened in their efforts, they were sustained in their struggles, they were comforted in conflicts, they were delivered from difficulties, they became more than conquerors, because they endured as seeing Him Who is invisible in the

[12] Francis J. McConnell: *The Christlike God*, pp. 135, 149 (Abingdon Press).

[13] Rom. 11:33.

face of Jesus Christ. It often seemed to them that God's side was not the winning side, but they had faith not to be deceived by appearances. They thus acted not on the impulse of panic, but in the patience of insight; and their course was justified by the triumphant results. This is the assurance of God which is the secret of truly noble living. It is well expressed in the confession of St. Paul: "And such confidence have we through Christ to Godward: not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to account anything as from ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God." [14]

### For Further Reading

A. Seth Pringle-Pattison: *The Idea of God* (Oxford University Press).

Francis J. McConnell: *The Christlike God* (The Abingdon Press).

E. Griffith-Jones: *Providence Human and Divine*, Vol. I (George H. Doran Company).

H. R. Mackintosh: *The Christian Experience of Forgiveness* (Harper & Brothers).

W. Morgan: *The Nature and Right of Religion* (Charles Scribner's Sons).

Rudolf Otto: *The Idea of the Holy* (Oxford University Press).

[14] II Cor. 3:4 f.

J. B. Pratt: *The Religious Consciousness* (The Macmillan Company).

Joseph Needham (Editor): *Science, Religion and Reality* (The Macmillian Company).

D. M. Baillie: *Faith in God and Its Christian Consummation* (Charles Scribner's Sons).

## *Chapter III: The Sufficient Christ*

THE validity of experience as an argument for truth must reckon with personal and historical factors. It is not enough merely to summon a company of individuals who have had a similar experience. The fact that it is an experience and not an inference, an insight into reality and not an illusion of sensations, must be supported by the impartial verdicts of history. The preconceived opinions of favorable or hostile prejudice count for nothing in a scientific appraisal of judgments of value which are theoretical and objective, and of value judgments which are subjective and represent personal experience. Both judgments must lend themselves to social verification. Sane and reliable conclusions are obtained when an arbitrary spirit yields to a dispassionate temper.

The New Testament fearlessly submits to this searching test. It is not a compendium of definitions, which invariably limit truth by checks that handicap later discoveries. It is an interpreta-

tion of a supreme fact vouched for by history and verified in experience. It is indeed our only reliable source of knowledge concerning Jesus Christ, who is the watershed of the divine revelation. Some scholars, whose preconceptions discredit accurate learning, discard the New Testament as historically worthless. To be sure, they have saved a few fragments out of the wreckage, but these complicate rather than solve the problem. A better sense of proportion has induced others to distinguish the portrait and its framework. They rightly contend that Jesus Christ is not the composite personification of the best impulses of a first-century group of enthusiasts. He is an individual, historical character, whose sublime personality and unique ministry have made him the object of worship of unnumbered millions of human hearts throughout all the centuries.

What was said in the previous chapter about the Christlike God carried with it the implication that Christ is at the very core and soul of the universe. He is the climax and completion of the noblest Godward aspirations and achievements of mankind. "All that came before him led up to him, all that comes after him must start from him, 'That in all things he may have the pre-

eminence.'"[1] This is the daring claim of the New Testament which has been endorsed by the Christian Church, *ubique, semper et ab omnibus.* A rereading of its pages, in the light of recent study of first-century history and of non-Christian literature, magnifies the sublime splendor of Christ. Professor Angus well sums up the case: "If we accept Hegel's formula of evolution—thesis, antithesis, synthesis—we might say that Greek and Roman religions represented the thesis (social-ethical religions); the mysteries, the antithesis (individualistic-mystic); while Judaism presented both thesis and antithesis, but labored in vain to discover the synthesis. It was Christianity that found the synthesis."[2] This was made possible because of its unique advantage over all its rivals, in having at the center of its faith a historic Person, who was greater than his teachings and who himself was the dynamic of redemption.

The New Testament, moreover, gives us a progressive conception of the Person and Work of Christ. It presents an increasing evaluation, occasioned by the expansion of the Church, from a sect under the ægis of Judaism to a world religion, offering the evangelical experience of pardon and

[1] T. H. Robinson: *Prophecy and the Prophets*, p. 210 (Scribner's).
[2] S. Angus: *The Mystery Religions and Christianity*, p. 259 (Scribner's).

peace to all peoples and nations. This fact is patent to any who read these writings in the chronological order of their production. Taken together, they present a complete view of Jesus Christ. He adequately meets the demand for Truth, which is the challenge of reason; the desire for Beauty, which is the call of the emotions; the passion for Goodness, which is the cry of the will. All three focus attention on the culture of character and the performance of duty. Herein is exhibited the moral and spiritual grandeur of Christ. He stands for the permanent realities and sanctities of life more completely than any of the elect souls of the race. He awakens our deepest sense of responsibility, and commands our conscience, and directs our enthusiasms. He enunciates the highest values, not by a system of precepts but by exemplifying them as radiant realities in his own life. Above all, he brings to us an experience of the holiness and grace of God, and reinforces our energies to realize life's richest blessings through communion with God. Wherever this vision of Christ has found acceptance, the largest benefits have been enjoyed.

We think of Christ as the Word of God, not merely in the philosophical sense conveyed by the Logos doctrine of speculation, or according to the

theological understanding of the Kenosis truth concerning the humiliation of the Son of God. The truest Christology is given in terms of experience, which helps us to understand that "God was in Christ."[3] Through him we discover the sublime God as the struggling God; the righteous God as the giver of redemption; the God of majesty and power as showing mercy and kindness. Christ is the Word of God as the living announcement in human form of the sympathy, the beneficence, the forgiveness of the Eternal. This assurance gives to contrite hearts "the peace of God which passeth all understanding."[4] They are convinced of the divinity of Christ by the conclusive argument and appeal of actual living.

Consider the germinative quality of the truth imparted by Jesus Christ. His teaching was at no point tentative and problematical. It centered around a few great ideas concerning God, man, sin, and redemption, which were shown to bear upon the deepest issues of life and destiny. Other religious teachers had spoken of a God of sovereign mercy and impartial justice. The best of these seers, however, expressed their confidence in aspirations which had a limited range in their own experience. Jesus was the pioneer in the

[3] II Cor. 5:19. [4] Phil. 4:7.

deepest knowledge of God and in the richest experience of personal and intimate fellowship with Him. In referring to God as "My Father," he claimed to possess a unique filial consciousness, and to be the final revealer and interpreter of the whole mind of God.

His utterance had such conclusive authority because it was sustained by the matchless beauty of his character, the unique buoyancy of his spirit, the incomparable bounty of his works of gracious helpfulness. The challenge, "Which of you convicteth me of sin?" was the testimony of his crystal conscience, which had never been marred by the chain or stain of sin.[5] He had no occasion to justify himself at the bar of reason, morals, and religion, since his intrinsic goodness substantiated his own claim to sinlessness, which was endorsed by those who knew him in the inner circle of direct contact. Recall the serene calmness which always marked his demeanor in the encounters with opposition, in the emergencies of crisis, in the exactions of strenuous ministering. His care-free spirit was united with an eager concern for the fulfillment of God's will among men. His freedom from the sinister snares of fear and melancholy advertised his filial trust in God and magni-

[5] John 8:46.

fied the divine Providence that never fails in the dread seasons of adversity, distress, and conflict. Indeed, Jesus was never compelled to confess weakness, error or failure at any moment in his career. Nor did he ever indulge in the bitterness of pessimism and in the invectives of retaliation. His solitariness was not the exclusiveness of superiority, but the holiness of perfection which led him to consecrate himself to the removal of the disagreements, the disparities, and the depravities among men. To be sure, he was severe towards those whose evil was due to inveterate obstinacy in blinding themselves to the light, in insisting on their vested rights in scorn of right and truth, in selfishly withholding genuine benefits from the needy and disturbed sons of men. But he could not be hid from the desolate, who found him ready to give relief to their disease, pain, and sorrow. This is the testimony of his miracles, which were tokens of his kindly consideration more than proofs of his divine power.

He came upon the scene of human life, not as an adventurer seeking his fortune nor as a reformer of current customs, but as the Prophet of the Highest, to unveil God and to make vivid the beauty of holiness in commonplace circumstances. What he said about God had the directness of

intuitive insight more than of acquired information. He did not deal with speculations which are the monopoly of the trained intellect but with realities which can be verified by all alike. His message had not the slightest accent of the provincialism, which implies that some nations are superior to others because of birth and inherited privilege. He always magnified the distinction of character, which carries its own credentials of merit, independent of class or racial differences. He thus demonstrated the versatile many-sidedness of his humanism and showed the hospitality of God to every individual.

His surprising faith in his hearers was illustrated, when he encouraged them to accept him as the sole condition of finally arriving at the perfection of God. He knew they were capable of unlimited response and he incited them to the limit of their abilities. The results justified his unprecedented manner of approach to men. He also exercised the divine prerogative to forgive sin, not in the name of God but in his own name and on his own authority. This attitude of friendliness and good-will was reciprocated by penitents, who received from him the joy of pardon and the blessing of peace. What a chorus of jubilant testimony has sounded through all the centuries, from thousands

who have experienced this unsurpassed benefaction, according to the riches of Christ's grace! No other religious leader staked everything on the allegiance of his followers, and no one has received such undivided loyalty in successive ages.

The heroism of Jesus is seen in the way he compelled men to consider his claims. He produced upon them the impression of their moral helplessness and failure. But with an amazing compulsion he also gave them the assurance that through him they could get rid of their despair, and achieve moral success. This unique mission was clearly understood even by the enemies of Jesus, who repudiated it in the interest of their religious preconceptions. Their reference to him as "the Friend of publicans and sinners" was intended as a slander to discredit his work. But the title has been eagerly seized by his followers as an expressive testimony to his unique greatness as the Saviour of the lost. It is in times of stress that the heroic qualities of Jesus prove him to be peculiarly competent to meet human needs. This aspect of his character is conspicuous in the Four Gospels. Contemplate his courage in the face of religious and ecclesiastical prejudice, the worst of its kind; his serenity and self-control in an atmosphere of bitter criticism; his patience with the mis-

understandings and faulty judgments of his own disciples; his firm resolution to go to Jerusalem, even when he knew that it meant the tragedy of death upon the cross; his reasoned conviction of the redeeming significance of his supreme sacrifice; his sober confidence in the consistent approval of God of all his actions. When we further remember the early adulthood of Jesus, the exhibition of his courage in all the episodes of his life becomes more profoundly impressive. The early Moravians, who knew the bitterness of persecution, were inspired in their devotion to Christ by the memory of his youth and courage. It is certainly to be regretted that Isaac Watts changed the lines of his familiar hymn, which originally ran:

> "When I survey the wondrous Cross
> Where the *Young* Prince of glory died."

This note of courage needs to be recovered by the Church. It was reported that the men in the trenches seldom appreciated the heroic side of our Master's character. Most of them thought of a sentimental Christ, learned from Sunday school hymns of "a rather weak and washy type." They confused gentleness with softness, and naturally concluded that effeminacy is a good enough quality for the parlor and for plaster saints. But in the

grim struggles of warfare they needed militant virtues, which were not necessarily to be confused with brutality and vengeance. It was a strengthening revelation to many of them when the buoyant fortitude of Jesus was set in the context of conflict. One of the men wrote home: "We used to wonder what kind of stuff Drake's men were made of, that they could jest while they died. We used to contrast ourselves with them to our disfavor." Did these men know that this British admiral of the sixteenth century confessedly owed his genius to the influence of Christ over his life? This fact explains the behavior of his men in their stern encounters. It is indeed the outstanding explanation of many of the noblest lives down to our own day. The tone and temper of the Church's message would be greatly enhanced if this undeniable circumstance were more diligently proclaimed.

The first Christians thought of Jesus Christ as a living reality and not as a fond memory. They were related to him by personal realization and not by group recollection. They rejoiced in him as a present Friend and Comrade, and they were assured that all would be well with them, so long as they were intimately conscious of his

gracious fellowship. They were guided by the vital experience of Christ as Redeemer more than by any doctrine concerning Christ. And the opulence of this jubilant experience was determined by their attitude of faith towards him. Their central conviction was expressed in the utterance, "Jesus is Lord." [6] They worshiped him as God, and gave to him not the adulation of cringing flattery but the adoration of grateful love.

It meant a great deal for the Jewish Christians, with monotheism in their blood, to elevate Jesus to the rank of equality with God, without in the least feeling that they weakened the unity of the divine personality. The Gentile Christians were nurtured in pagan polytheism, but with a new emphasis they exalted Jesus to the highest position of deity. Jewish and Gentile Christians alike were largely accustomed to think of God as a philosophical and theological abstraction. To them Christ became the real God, and prayers were more frequently offered to him than to God. He was regarded as so perfectly qualified to help them in every crisis that they did not think it necessary to look beyond him. It was, therefore, inevitable that Jesus Christ should have exercised complete and controlling authority, and won the hearty al-

[6] Rom. 10:9.

legiance of believers who accepted him as Creator, Providential Ruler, Redeemer, and Judge.[7]

The dismay and destitution of life in the first Christian century were due to alienations from God, caused by sin, and to misconceptions of God as the Sovereign of the universe. In that first century men were oppressed by the power of evil spirits, which kept them in the bonds of fear, in much the same way that the pagan world of to-day is haunted and hunted by demonism. They were also held in bondage to law, which was not the synonym of order making for freedom. It was the law of ceremonial worship maintained in different ways and enforced by the rigid interpretations of casuistry. But the effect was equally the same on the lives of those who accepted Judaism, the Mystery Religions or the Oriental Cults. They were swayed by fatalism which brought no peace to the devotees of these rites and regulations. Instead, there was the deepening gloom of moral failure and spiritual incapacity. This experience in Judaism was voiced by St. Paul before his conversion, when he declared: "Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?"[8] The mood of pessimism, characteristic

[7] *Cf.* A. C. McGiffert: *The God of the Early Christians* (Scribner's).
[8] Rom. 7:24.

of paganism, was strikingly evidenced in the *Thoughts of Marcus Aurelius*. Everywhere salvation was conceived of, in a negative sense, as deliverance from ills, and not positively as communion with God. As a matter of fact, the actual experience of that day was one of spiritual bankruptcy.

Contrast this with the genuine experience of the early Christians, who knew Christ as Saviour in a very profound sense. They received deliverance "not by being taken out of the way of the wrath of God, but by being brought into the very heart of God."[9] Salvation to them was emancipation from the menace of fear, the shackles of ritualism, the tyranny of sin. In the positive sense, it was the consciousness of sonship, the communion of fellowship, the conquest of evil, the certainty of immortality. Their ringing declaration of assurance might well be expressed in the words: "We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."[10] The credibility of this testimony was placed beyond doubt or cavil by their lives, which were renewed and transformed by the indwelling Spirit of the Eternal Christ.

This convincing argument for the reality of

[9] T. R. Glover: *Jesus in the Experience of Men*, p. 45 (Doran).
[10] Rom. 5:1.

Christ has been repeatedly offered by Christians of every age. The historical survey of the various Christological theories suggests the successive attempts of the Church to offer restatements of the Person of Christ, in terms of the thought and language of each age. But they all point to the same conclusion, so well stated in the triumphant affirmation: "He is able to save to the uttermost (for all time or completely) them that draw near to God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."[11] There was never a reservation of doubt in the homage offered the Eternal Redeemer. So long as the Reality was acknowledged, changing categories of thought and different forms of interpretation rather magnified the veracity and the authority of the Vision of God's Love in Jesus Christ.

Some attempts to re-present the character of Jesus cannot be endorsed by the Christian consciousness, even though they may be accepted as well-meaning attempts to direct attention to the Fact of Christ. Renan's *Vie de Jésus* was one of the earliest interpretations, written, to be sure, in a spirit of reverence but giving a portrait of the artistic imagination with a very slender basis in history. The work of the French humanist has

[11] Heb. 7:25.

been imitated by others without his literary success, but they all offer a hypothetical Christ and not the historical Christ adored by the Church of every age. Bruce Barton's *The Man Nobody Knows* is a journalist's version of Jesus as a jovial and social soul, having all the fine features characteristic of the better type of American of the machine age. Middleton Murry's *Jesus Man of Genius* is a poetical effusion by a literary critic, who was compelled to reckon with Jesus by the pressure of certain depressing experiences. But his sincere reflections on the Master lead us nowhere, at least not to the days of his spiritual influence over the human race. *The Historical Life of Christ* by J. Warschauer is a theological discussion of marked ability, but the interpretation exceeds the bounds of rationalism, and what is given is a bizarre picture of the Christ of our redemption.

The religious history school represented by W. Bousset and Kirsopp Lake explains the cosmopolitanism of Christianity by the infusion of Hellenistic ideas. This conception of Jesus Christ is watered down so that he becomes a charming ethical teacher with a provincial accent, who is not big enough to account for his marvelous influence in history and in our own day. The theory, moreover, introduces elements foreign to the genius of

New Testament Christianity, and it offers an attenuated version of it, which is radically contradicted by the consentient testimony of the Church. We need to reckon with the Jesus of history and the Christ of experience, in order that we may have a comprehensive appreciation of his sufficiency. Even when this is done, we have to acknowledge that the horizon is much wider than the apprehension of the keenest. There is no fixed point beyond which we may not go:

> "And though thy soul sail leagues and leagues beyond—
> Still leagues beyond those leagues there is more sea."

Consider religion from any angle, and it must be conceded that for the modern man there is nothing comparable with the version of religion given by Jesus Christ. This conviction receives multiplied confirmation as we heed the voice of twenty centuries. He is the inevitable Christ, with whom we must make a personal reckoning if we are truly to understand the vigor and vitality of his influence. He is the ubiquitous Christ, whom we meet at every crisis in history and at all the crossroads of present-day journeys. He is the magnetic Christ, who attracts unto himself peoples of all colors and races, and whose urgent needs of salvation are completely met by him. Stanley

Jones calls him *The Christ of the Indian Road*, and in his volume with this suggestive title, he shows how Jesus Christ is becoming naturalized in that Oriental land. In keeping with this figure of speech, it might be said that he is the Christ of the Chinese highways, of the African jungle paths, of the European streets, of the American avenues, of every pilgrim road in every land under the sun. To all sorts and conditions of mankind, he has made himself known as the Companion in seasons of perplexity, the Counselor in days of uncertainty, the Comforter in times of adversity. Indeed, all who have suffered from the anguish of sin, from the confusions of discord, from the mishaps of failure, from the disgrace of dishonor, have assuredly been helped by him in the benighted hours of trial. Well might Principal James Denney be the spokesman of this company of trusting souls and say for each one of them: "What makes me even the kind of Christian that I am is that I dare not turn my back on Jesus and put Him out of my life."

Our most urgent need is the frank acceptance of Jesus Christ, who is "The same yesterday, to-day, yea and for ever." [12] The bane of much modern Christianity is that it is satisfied with a partial

[12] Heb. 13:8.

Christ, a sentimental Christ, a superficial Christ, a theological Christ, an ecclesiastical Christ, a ready-made Christ, a second-hand Christ. This is not the radiant and redeeming Christ of the New Testament, who touches life at all its strategic points, and leads the vanguard marching towards the City of God. He is *Christus Consummator*, the crown of perfection, the giver of redemption, who perpetuates himself in the lives of all devoted believers. They have the vivid experience which enables them to say with St. Paul: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution or peril or sword? . . . Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life . . . shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." [13]

"Surely he cometh, and a thousand voices
Call to the saints and to the deaf are dumb;
Surely he cometh, and the earth rejoices
Glad in his coming who hath sworn, I come.

"This hath he done and shall we not adore him?
This shall he do and can we still despair?
Come let us quickly fling ourselves before him,
Cast at his feet the burthen of our care.

[13] Rom. 8:35 ff.

## THE SUFFICIENT CHRIST

"Yea thro' life, death, thro' sorrow and thro' sinning
He shall suffice me, for he hath sufficed:
Christ is the end, for Christ was the beginning,
Christ the beginning, for the end is Christ." [14]

### For Further Reading


A. E. J. Rawlinson: *The New Testament Doctrine of the Christ* (Longman's, Green and Company).

William Temple: *Christ the Truth* (The Macmillan Company).

Edwin Lewis: *Jesus Christ and the Human Quest* (The Abingdon Press).

Arthur C. Headlam: *Jesus Christ in History and Faith* (Harvard University Press).

W. J. Dawson: *The Man Christ Jesus* (The Century Co.).

T. R. Glover: *Jesus in the Experience of Men* (George H. Doran Company).

H. R. MacKintosh: *The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ* (Charles Scribner's Sons).

E. Stanley Jones: *Christ at the Round Table* (The Abingdon Press).


[14] F. W. H. Myers: *Saint Paul*, p. 52 (Macmillan).

## *Chapter IV: The Widening Horizon*

HISTORY is a fertile study because it reveals the struggles and achievements of mankind and gives us a clearer conception of the true nature and meaning of reality. It is at once perplexing and clarifying since it exhibits the perversities of some men which humiliate us, and the virtues of others which enthrall us. These opposite practices are furthermore to be considered with reference to the influences of their respective times, according to the generous principles of historical interpretation. Many lines of investigation have to be reckoned with for the sake of an adequate perspective. The contributions of biology, anthropology, sociology, and psychology help us to understand the many phases of human experience from within and from without. We need, however, to guard against much of the picture thinking and the metaphorical language of these sciences, lest we read into the past the prepossessions of the present.

Primitive man, who is but dimly represented

by the savage of to-day, lived under the insistent compulsions of *tabu* which regulated customs, and under the constraints of *mana* or the grace of ceremonial religion. Customs and ceremonies have varied with each age and country. The passage has been long and tedious, from the simplicities of early times to the bewildering complexities of later and modern periods. The oft-quoted saying that "history repeats itself" is a half-truth. There is no absolute assurance that even a machine will repeatedly operate with precision. Allowance must be made for the contingency of accidents. Man is not a mere mechanism, but lives under variable laws, determined by climate, tradition, and the constant flux of circumstances. The story of mankind is not to be understood in terms of "cyclical recurrences," but of evolutionary progress. "Epochs of so-called decadence are in truth epochs of transition from an old life to a new." [1] Whatever might be said about the underlying unity of purpose during these epochs, it cannot be affirmed that under given conditions similar results would inevitably prevail.

The life of men and of nations has followed certain sequences according to the laws of action

[1] W. G. de Burgh: *The Legacy of the Ancient World*, p. 411 (Macmillan).

and reaction. World history is the collective biography of civilizations and cultures. The pendulum theory of history cannot, however, be substantiated, in view of the continuous advance during the centuries. In spite of some evidences to the contrary, the humanization of peoples is going on apace. The very revolts of restlessness are an indication that higher standards are demanded and are being established. The febrile activities and the erratic extravagances of luxury and pleasure should not lead us to ignore the eager responses given to the relief of distress in every part of the world.

Man is, no doubt, the latest arrival upon the earth. In comparison with its other denizens, he is insignificant as to physical size and powers of endurance. But his distinction lies in his possession of vital energy, which enables him to control and direct the forces of heredity and environment by processes of continuous adjustment. It is a romantic story, looked at from any standpoint, of the human development of instinct, intellect, emotion, will, moral sense, religious spirit. Whatever explanations may be offered about the origin of these distinctive features of personality, it has to be acknowledged that man has abiding worth which gives him a position of enkindling superi-

ority over all creation. It may not flatter our vanity to be told that man developed from an apelike, nut-eating creature to his present position of dignified self-reliance. The Bible account of creation declares that "the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground." [2] That is low enough, but when we remember that the work was performed by the Creative Spirit of the Eternal, we realize that the significant consideration is not whence man came but whither he is bound. The stress is then to be laid not on origin, but on destiny. Man is common clay, to be sure, but there pulsates within him the breath of God, which marks his dignity above the animals. Have we risen from the beast? What of it, so long as we stand upon our feet and with upright mien strive for that which is beyond us, in the heavenlies, assured that it shall ultimately be reached?

William James of Harvard once quoted the remark of a man who worked around his house. He was unlettered but he had the insight to say, "There is not much difference between one man and another, but what there is is of great importance." It is so radically different as to separate man even from the anthropoid ape by an impassable gulf. Environment assuredly does account

[2] Gen. 2:7.

for much, but we must go beyond what is of the earth earthy. We understand the surmise of Professor J. Arthur Thomson that man has "some penetrating environmental stimulus," in the sense recognized by St. Paul that in God "we live, and move, and have our being."[3] God is the higher environment of the human soul. What distinguishes one person from another is not in greater intellectual endowment, but in the deeper consciousness of God, which gives him the larger capacity to conceive sublime ideals and the better ability to realize them. Herein is the true glory of man,

> "Who rowing hard against the stream,
> Sees distant gates of Eden gleam,
> And does not dream it is a dream."

We are accustomed to think of man as the victim of circumstances. The whining spirit is a confession of failure before the forces of heredity and environment. On the other hand, the spirit of faith and fortitude has wrestled with the downward bias and turned defeat into victory. The most fertile thinkers of the world owed little to the patronage of the aristocracy of birth or of wealth. They belonged to the ranks of the bourgeoisie and even of the proletariat. Who

[3] Acts 17:28.

produced much of the creative work in philosophy, art, literature, music, politics, and religion? It was done by Socrates the son of a midwife, Aristotle the son of a physician, Mohammed the son of a merchant, Leonardo da Vinci the son of a notary, Luther the son of a miner, Spinoza the son of a merchant, Shakespeare the son of a butcher, Voltaire the son of an attorney, Kant the son of a saddler, Michael Faraday the son of a blacksmith, Beethoven the son of a shiftless musician, Carlyle the son of a stonemason, Browning the son of a clerk, Louis Pasteur the son of a tanner, Lincoln the son of a carpenter. There are exceptions such as Plato, Bacon, Washington, Gladstone, Phillips Brooks, and others. But the fact remains that as the sap rises upward from below, so the vital energies that wrought for the enlightenment and emancipation of the race have come from those leaders who rose out of the midst of the common people.

Jesus Christ was the first to espouse the cause of the common man without apology. He pointed out that external conditions do not constitute the final influence in making or marring human freedom and duty. It is the "ruling passion" of life that furnishes the reliable test of genuine worth. There is no need to despair of anyone, if we

recognize, as the Master did, that there are hidden and latent possibilities within the most obscure and oppressed individual. He looked beneath the superficial disguises and saw the sanctity of the commonplace, even in the dull routine and drab drudgery of untoward situations. His discovery of the eternal worth of what materialistic calculations adjudged as the last, the least, and the lost among men, started a revolution. It will not cease to run its course until every son and daughter of Eve are given a more equitable share of the treasure, the leisure and the pleasure of life, for the realization of human dignity and responsibility.

The tendency of religion has always been to become esoteric and exclusive. It establishes a priestly caste which confirms the impression that religion is something apart from life. This type of religious person passes his days in a ceremonial round of poses and professions, which are unreal and of dubious value to the rank and file. Prophets and reformers have protested against such a perversion of life's supremest benefit, but it was Jesus who laicized religion on a large scale. He announced the freedom of access to God for the masses of the laity. He was doubtless aware of what Viscount Bryce calls "the fatalism of the

multitude": the belief that the majority is right and that it must prevail.[4] Jesus guarded against this form of tyranny by emphasizing the fraternal nexus which conserves the rights of the individual, with due regard to his responsibilities towards the many. He also emphasized with no less insistence that on the same basis the weaker must not be exploited by the stronger.

This was a new note in religion. The sacredness of personality is one of the distinctive contributions of the New Testament. It is true that slavery as such was not openly condemned by the early Church, but the welcome given to both slave and free in the Christian fellowship carried with it the implication that character is the *open sesame* into polite society. Our Lord's mission "to proclaim release to the captives" had reference to all who are kept in bondage by inhuman traditions, iniquitous social conventions, pernicious economic conditions. It was his great privilege to liberate the imprisoned splendor within the human soul and to confute the skepticism of the favored, concerning the responsiveness to the noblest virtues on the part of those disinherited by age-long handicaps. The Church has accepted this stand-

[4] James Bryce: *The American Commonwealth*, Vol. II, pp. 347 ff (Macmillan).

point in theory, but it has contradicted it in practice. It is incredible that with an open Bible, Evangelicals of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, such as Wilberforce, should have regarded the miserable lot of the poor as a dispensation from God. He urged them to show contentment in spite of their degrading discomforts, and he reminded them that if faithful here they would be compensated with blessedness hereafter.[5] Such a type of other worldliness had a grossly crude conception of individual and social values. It inculcated a *laissez-faire* attitude towards intolerable conditions; but underlying it was a camouflaged cowardly plea for self-protection by the rich who fattened on the sufferings of the poor. The absurdity of such a view of life was bound to be repudiated. The social conscience of the Church has been awakened, but a great deal yet remains to be done to give proof that Christians are really serious in their acceptance of the genuine humanism and humanitarianism of Jesus Christ.

A mere individual is a phantom of the imagination. The ancient counsel, "Know thyself," has tended to an ascetic self-introspection which

[5] *Cf.* W. Wilberforce: *Practical View of the Prevailing Religious Systems of Professed Christians* (1797).

paralyzes initiative. A man understands himself only in relationships with others. He realizes his best according to the principle of social sympathy which excludes selfishness and snobbishness. This is the truth of brotherhood which was first enunciated by Jesus in a liberal and generous spirit. The genius of the family recognizes unity in diversity. Its members are not duplicates of one another, and yet their very unlikeness holds them together by the spirit of a common concern for the welfare of everyone within this mystic circle. Indeed, the glory of the family is in the measure that the stronger uphold and protect the weaker. So should it also be with the whole family of mankind. No individual is a law unto himself. He obeys the law that makes possible the greatest good of the largest number, yea, of all. No one is safe so long as oppression and intimidation exist anywhere. The fires of revolt have a tragic facility of overleaping barriers and appearing in the least expected places.

The conflagrations, which have jeopardized the very existence of the human race, have generally been caused by the insanities of autocracies, oligarchies, aristocracies, and plutocracies, which have vainly endeavored to exercise monopoly rights at the expense of the leaderless majorities.

They are camouflaged tyrannies which disguise their real intentions by the benevolent gestures of paternalism. Mobocracy likewise is a tyranny, and it is apt to be ruthlessly violent because it is unorganized and swayed by frantic and intense emotions. These uncontrolled outbursts are the protests of anguish and suffering, which discard all restraints and bring riotous desolation to the perpetrators and to the victims of social and economic injustice. We need not turn the pages of history for illustrations, when a lurid chapter is being written to-day in Russia, which painfully illustrates the excesses of mob rule.

The claim for democracy has been challenged in many quarters. Democracy has doubtless been often used as a verbal umbrella under which to take shelter from various storms. But no other method of government demands more from its constituents and none gives them better returns. It makes larger drafts upon individual intelligence, upon the exercise of self-control, upon the acceptance of the sanctity of personality and of the rights of others, upon the wholesome practices of coöperation as against the insidious conspiracies of competition. There are at least three tests by which the root principle of a genuine democracy might be certified: its eager concern for

justice to individuals; its careful regard for the rights of minorities; its scrupulous respect for the mandates of conscience. The last is the most vital, for even though the conscientious objector may be a fanatic, his prescriptive rights in a democracy cannot be discounted.[6]

The Athenian democracy, which flourished for a century, "made an atmosphere where genius could grow, where it could be as happy perhaps as genius ever can, and where it flowered and bore the strange fruit that has enriched the world for ever."[7] But this achievement of the fifth century, B.C., ended in a *cul de sac*, as was the case with the Republic of Rome in the second century, B.C. They virtually committed suicide because they were overcome by internal bankruptcy, caused by the failure of the citizenship to exhibit vigilance and loyalty. Viscount Bryce concludes his comprehensive survey of the theory and practice of modern democracy on the high note of hopefulness. He suggests that we should take with a large grain of salt those jeremiads which bewail the present to the advantage of the past. To be sure, democracy has brought disappointments, but

[6] *Cf.* William Temple: *Essays in Christian Politics and Kindred Subjects*, p. 77 (Longmans, Green).

[7] T. R. Glover: *Democracy in the Ancient World*, pp. 73, 227 (Macmillan).

its gains have been greater than its losses. It has "belied the prophecies both of its friends and of its enemies. It has failed to give some benefits which the former expected, it has escaped some of the evils which the latter feared. If the optimists overvalued its moral influence, the pessimists undervalued its practical aptitudes. It has reproduced most of the evils which have belonged to other forms of government, though in different forms, and the few it has added are less serious than those evils of the older governments which it has escaped." [8]

The dogma of equality has often been a good talking point to swell majorities, but in the final analysis it is not equality but efficiency that controls the situation. The equality of opportunity must not be confused with the equality of ability. What Jesus meant by equality referred to the leveling up of life and not to a lowering of its standards. We need to reckon with the operative impulses of human nature—what mathematics refers to as "constants"—such as ambition and indolence, jealousy and loyalty, selfishness and sympathy, love and hatred, gratitude and revenge. The value of a social order, then, is not to be tested by the flashing generalizations of magnetic

[8] James Bryce: *Modern Democracies*, Vol. II, p. 562 (Macmillan).

orators, but by its ability to discipline and develop character in an atmosphere that encourages every individual to bring out the best that is in him.

Jesus magnified the inexhaustible resources of human life, and his conclusion has been repeatedly illustrated and endorsed by the centuries. Pedantic verdicts that the frontiers are reached have been frequently shattered by unexpected feats of pioneering skill. The conquest of the air is yet in its infancy, and no number of fatalities will scare heroic adventurers from excursions into the unknown. Indeed, the lure of the hazardous is a summons and not a threat. A forlorn hope is thus converted into a glorious triumph, and an ominous fate becomes an opulent fortune. The temper of panic, which embarrasses our modern life by its hectic exaggerations, is as jejune as that shallow optimism which overlooks perils, as though this were a fool-proof universe. The attitude of wisdom reckons with the evil and the good, and strikes a balance which entirely justifies the conclusion that every winter leads to spring.

The ancient civilizations went down to defeat because they were exclusive and static. Their isolation intensified the spirit of suspicion and distrust, and unfitted them to make a complete impact upon life. Their failures expose the folly of the

idea of inherent superiority, and the futility of the compartment theory of life. The cold intellectualism of Greece, the harsh imperialism of Rome, the arid religionism of Palestine, represented a haughty short-sightedness, which still interrupts genuine progress. The claims to racial supremacy and nationalistic sovereignty are based upon hysteria and not upon history. Where is the pure race to be found? Mankind to-day is more mongrel than at any previous period. Investigations, moreover, show that mixed races are far superior. Such a conclusion is not to be taken as encouraging the indiscriminate blending of different stocks. It rather repudiates the egoistic pretensions to brutal domination at a time when the eager cry everywhere is for spiritual deliverance.

Many current theories of civilization are like the Ptolemaic system of astronomy, which made the earth the center of the universe. The history of the West has been written with little reference to the Orient, as though it had made no real contribution towards an understanding of the wholeness of life. In *The Decline of the West*, Spengler advocates what he calls the Copernican system of history. It is assuredly far more acceptable, since it provides for an impartial and equitable estimate of every type of civilization and

culture—Occidental and Oriental, ancient and modern. Such a comprehensive view affords a discerning appreciation of mankind's advances towards the City of God. But Spengler's predisposition for the superman is inspired by a militaristic passion, akin to the worship of brutality and force. His patronizing denunciations of democracy disguise a contempt for the proletariat. It reflects the traditional prejudices of the European mind, complacently dreaming of imperialistic expansion, at a time when the masses of the people are everywhere revolting against the servile exploitations, from which they have suffered for centuries.

It is an assertion and not an argument, when another writer declares that the determining elements in the world civilization of the future will be contributed by the West and not by the East. The Light of the World came from the East. Why may not the next *palingensia*, or regeneration, come from the same source? It may not flatter our Occidental conceit and our vain claims to Nordic superiority, to be reminded of this probability. A recent volume, entitled *Christianity as Bhakti Marga*, by A. J. Appasamy, reminds one of a statement made several years ago by Bishop Brooke Foss Westcott, that an adequate exposition of the Gospel of St. John will be writ-

ten after India turns to Christ. The Japanese victory over Russia in 1904 was much more than a military triumph. It was a staggering discovery of the moral bankruptcy of an European nation and the rise to eminence of an Asiatic nation. The sleeping giant of China has at last awakened, and it cannot be predicted what constraints may proceed from that nation when it finds its soul. Bishop George R. Grose is quite correct that "the future of world civilization is bound up inseparably with what China does in the next fifty years."

The ancient poet glorified the valor of warlike heroes in the epic of "Arms and the Man"; the modern sage celebrated man's conquest over Nature in the epic of "Tools and the Man." The time has now come to sing the epic of "God and the Man," announcing the truth that they are the joint heroes of the world of the future.[9] Who is more competent than Jesus Christ to furnish the *motif* of this superb oratorio? He is the supreme synthesis of culture, law and religion. He gathered up in himself all the significance of the past and initiated a new ideal for mankind. His Gospel of good-will is being heard among the nations as never before. What a vision comes

[9] E. Griffith Jones: *Providence Divine and Human*, Vol. I, p. 308 (Doran).

before us in contemplating the fields of missionary activity! What marvelous results have been achieved, in spite of the propaganda of ill-will and despair by both Western and Eastern peoples! The challenge is well stated by Dr. John R. Mott: "As the play of vast secular forces incident to modern civilization, such as the drive for raw materials and the spread of systems of communication and of industrialism from the west, bear down upon the less advanced peoples, the summons to the Christian forces, which seek to establish better human relationships and which promote the spread of spiritual ideals among men, becomes more clearly evident." [10]

History unfolds an extraordinary revelation of the growth of ideas and institutions, of customs and conduct, in the crucible of revolutions and other animated upheavals. These searching disciplines have also proved to be gratifying deliverances. At every period of the migrations and adaptations of peoples, there was displayed the marvelous potency of religion to regulate and stimulate the cultural activities of life in their manifold aspects. There is witnessed to-day the reawakening of nations, with an irrepressible

[10] H. P. Beach and C. H. Fahs: *World Missionary Atlas*, p. 9 (Institute of Social and Religious Research, New York).

determination on their part to secure the privileges of self-realization. Many of them are unshackled but perplexed. In their dilemma they are exposed to dangers, domestic and foreign, which threaten to plunge them into worse enslavements than those that had previously menaced and maltreated them. The problems of nationalism and internationalism, of economics and eugenics, are as serious as the problems of religion and of church unity. The solutions are by no means easy, as sanguine souls are inclined to suppose. But the travail of the centuries must yet yield desirable fruit in a world-wide Brotherhood, made possible by the larger acceptance of the Fatherhood of God, revealed in opulent terms by Jesus Christ. When this vision of our Lord controls the purposes and practices of his followers, then merit will be the final test, to realize the amicable unity of fraternity. It is in this sense that we think of the future, as stated by Rudyard Kipling:

"Oh East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's Great Judgment Seat;
But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,

When two strong men stand face to face, tho' they come from the ends of the earth."

### For Further Reading

W. G. de Burgh: *The Legacy of the Ancient World* (The Macmillan Company).

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## *Chapter V: Sight and Insight*

ATTEMPTS to justify the ways of God with man have been made in every age. Earnest souls who have undertaken to do this in unconventional ways were regarded as dangerous rebels and heretics. Their intellectual courage, psychological insight, and religious versatility were discredited by their contemporaries. But these unfavorable verdicts were frequently reversed by later generations. What were considered as gross presumptions in challenging prevailing ideas were subsequently welcomed as timely protests against inadequate solutions of life's dilemmas. It has never been a welcome task to turn away from the beaten paths, even when they have ceased to function. A disagreeable fate rests upon all who blaze a trail through unfamiliar territory.

The labors of these martyrs have, nevertheless, yielded fruitful gains. The illusion of finality cannot be maintained when we accept the view of a dynamic universe. It is "strung along," and its movements are serial and directive and not cir-

cular. It does not repeat the processes in cycles, but goes forward from one stage of attainment to another and a higher. It will so continue until the triumphant climax is reached when God shall be all in all. This is the philosophy of faith, so discerningly outlined by St. Paul in I Corinthians 15:20-28, and in Romans, chapters 9 to 11, where he deals with the pregnant truth of election to service. It is the spiritual idealism which advocates the Christian view as at once evolutionary and redemptive.

Traditional theories of the world order have been questioned in the name of religion, science, and philosophy. One of the earliest and greatest was the Book of Job, which demonstrated the rectitude of God's ways in a world of iniquity, pain, and suffering. Its assertion of faith, that the final outcome shall be to the praise of God the Eternal Redeemer, conclusively exposed the fallacy of some current religious theorists. They twisted the facts of life to suit their theories, instead of frankly facing the facts and modifying or discarding their theories.[1] The babel of voices is certainly disconcerting to-day. Panic so frequently takes the places of patience, and reason

[1] *Cf.* James McKechnie: *Job: Moral Hero, Religious Egoist and Mystic* (Doran).

is subordinated to the fancies of alarmism. No theory that accounts for everything is reliable. Any departure from previous solutions need not necessarily be regarded as a repudiation of them, but as an advance beyond them.

The earlier thinkers of the Church correlated the realities and experiences of Christianity to the systems of thought of their day, and conserved the virtue of spiritual values. For instance, the first- and second-century Christians transformed the metaphysical conception of the Logos in the interest of Christology. In the eleventh century, Anselm enriched the truth of soteriology, when he substituted the satisfaction theory of the Atonement for the pagan conception held by the Church, that the death of Christ was a ransom paid to the Devil. Why may we not exercise the same privilege of Christian freedom in reckoning with modern conceptions, and so give proof that we are not the prey of chance forces which work with erratic dexterity?

A time of trial is one of revelation in exposing the hidden foundations of life. The collapse of one structure testifies to the flimsy support on which it stood, while the survival of another gives evidence that it has a stable bottom. Many who confess that they have lost their faith virtually

acknowledge that they never had any. They discovered that they were relying upon religious conventions instead of religious convictions. They trusted to mere emotional appeals, and they wilted in the intense heat of conflict or in the frigid coldness of defeat. Faith shows itself at its best in tempestuous seasons and not during a calm voyage. Here is the difference between fatalism which evades responsibilities, and faith which carries them with a sense of privileged obligation. The greatest hero of faith endured the Cross because he looked at the distant triumph above the immediate disgrace. Recall the notables mentioned in the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. They had the long-range vision, which gave them the control of faith instead of the confusion of fear, and they were moved by the dynamic of courage and not by the depression of cowardice. They saw the garnering of their seed in the maturing of a golden harvest, which they or others after them were to gather for the welfare of the peoples. The annals of history are replete with similar exhibitions of devotion and daring.

We need this ability to see the advantages of disadvantages, the successes of failures, that we might cherish the assurance that there is no

lost good. Natural misfortunes have overtaken genuinely loyal souls, but the loss of health, wealth, and even of life in the discharge of duty is of lesser account than the moral and spiritual deterioration of recreants. "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" [2] Nothing, replies faith, which is the spirit of allegiance to the eternal infallibilities of truth, goodness, and beauty. Faith also is the practice of consecration to the supremest demands and not a mere affirmation of their worth. It is a certitude that makes more of sanctity than of security, and reckons frankly with the whole of life. It is "a conviction of the reality of things which we do not see." Such is the vitality of faith that, even if it is as small as a grain of mustard seed, it generates results of far-reaching moment. It may begin as a faint cry in the dark, but it steadily rises into a choral voice in the light. It may start out, as it were, on a hesitating quest after the Holy Grail, that symbol of communion with God, but it pursues the journey with relentless purpose, and finally enters the palace of the King, that abode of sacred delights and sublime benedictions.

The consistent exhortation of the Bible, from

[2] Mark 8:36.

Genesis to Revelation, is "Have faith." The natural inference is "If ye have not *faith*, ye cannot have *staith*." [3] The five senses of sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch are the elementary gateways, whereby we establish connections with our surroundings. But what distinguishes man from the animal creation is his possession of the sixth sense of faith. It is the creative faculty, which sees possibilities in what promises little, as did William Booth, who produced fortunes out of the waste material of human life. It hears the cry of need from the desolate centers of humanity, and sends deliverance through Livingstone, Paton, Thoburn, Williams, and other devoted missionaries. It gives voice to the mute masses through the advocacy of their cause by Lincoln, Shaftesbury, Barnardo, Beecher, and other humane souls of buoyant disposition. Lose faith, and the bond is snapped that unites us to God and to our fellows. Forfeit faith, and we drift into the ragged company of the sullen cynic, the barking critic, the bitter derelict.

The victories of faith are celebrated in every walk of life. All the pioneers into undiscovered realms of thought and deed achieved results be-

[3] This is Principal George Adam Smith's excellent rendering of Isaiah 7:9.

cause they saw possibilities beyond the purview of mere appearances. Discoverers of lands, such as Columbus, Hudson, Stanley, Nansen, followed the intuitions of their reason and enlarged the boundaries of the habitable world. Inventors, such at Watt, Fulton, Edison, Marconi, performed marvels with the skill of wizardry. Scientists, such as Darwin, Wallace, Agassiz, Crookes, Kelvin, Millikan, Whitehead, Pupin, brought order out of chaos. "Microbe hunters," such as Spallanzani, Pasteur, Koch, Metchnikoff, Theobald Smith, captured the enemies of life and destroyed their fell power. Philosophers, such as Kant, Hegel, Caird, Green, Bradley, Royce, Eucken, Bowne, James, Haldane, Bergson, extended the bounds of reason. Commercial magnates, such as Rothschild, Morgan, Rockefeller, Carnegie, developed the transactions of business on a gigantic scale.

These are all men of faith, who showed sight and insight. They went beyond the present and the visible, in obedience to the inner impulse, and with the flash of genius they seized the rich largess of life and spread benefits among mankind. To be sure, they entered upon their quest, as did Jason after the Golden Fleece, in the face of many obstacles. They were, however, not like Hamlet,

skilful in spinning out theories, but incompetent to work them out. Nor did they surrender their intuitions and convictions into the hands of hostile prejudices. They seriously counted the cost, braved the risks, disregarded the embarrassments, and obtained the prizes of fortune. They were justified by faith, in the sense that their ventures were endorsed by victories.

This virtue is needed in all life's transactions, for society can endure and prosper only on the basis of faith. It is, moreover, a personal relationship completed by fellowship. Just as life is maintained by correspondence with environment, and death follows where it is found wanting, so the human soul, through the response of faith, progresses towards perfection in that vitalizing environment which is God. He who is able to say, "I believe God," confesses the secret of his reliance and security. The surrender to God is not a blind, fatuous submission which remits personal responsibility. "If God wills," does not mean that he is an arbitrary despot, who might change his mind to suit a passing whim or fancy. It is rather a consistent reckoning with God as indispensable for the right conduct of all our affairs. "I planted, Apollos watered; but God

gave the increase," wrote the Apostle, who realized that God determines and disposes all things.[4]

Our ingenuity and skill are insufficient, unless God sets forward our efforts and energizes them with the divine afflatus. When we further remember that the character of God is revealed in Jesus Christ, we think of good-will, not as an anæmic attitude but as a passionate loyalty to One who is our Captain leading the forces of righteousness, our Guide directing the path of advance, our Helper in the crises and duties of life. Faith in God is not flattery but fidelity, not servility but sympathy, not slavery but sonship. Prayer is not a substitute for practice but a stimulus to it. More important than offering petitions is the ability that comes through prayer to discern the latent possibilities in failure, to regard honorable defeat as a form of victory, to detect the flaws which have shattered our dreams, to determine to reconstruct out of the ruins a temple more worthy of God and of our best selves.

Many fail because of a lack of courageous confidence in themselves. This is often due to a superficial self-knowledge which has not plumbed the depths of one's personality. He who has faith in himself is not staggered by the checks of mili-

[4] I Cor. 3:6.

tating circumstances. He is more concerned to be loyal to the inner light which is sustained from the altar of God. Such devotion overcomes the querulous temper of nervous hesitancy and dubious optimism. It is not self-love but self-control in God, that has equipped men to merit success, even though they may not achieve it. In this class are to be placed not only the conspicuous leaders, but the many obscure Christ-filled souls, who cared for no name at all and who were strangers to fame, but who were persuaded that "the great deed ne'er grows small." Every such modest and earnest soul can truly write his own credentials, in the words of Browning's "Asolando":

"One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake."

And yet there are noble souls who retreat within themselves. They need the word of appreciation and encouragement to realize their highest destiny. When the conventional casements of caste, prejudice, and indifference are lifted, we find "the same heart beats in every human breast." A com-

pany was fighting on the Russian front and suffering for lack of water. A shell from the enemy staggered them for a moment without doing any further damage. After the explosion they found that the shell had torn open the ground and released a spring of fresh water, much to their comfort. The persistent confidence of Jesus stirred human lives so that they discovered the opulence within them. He saw and revealed rich prospects in Jew and Samaritan, in Greek and barbarian, in saint and sinner, in the privileged and the outcast. His bountiful insight transformed Peter the fisherman into an apostle, Matthew the customs officer into the author of a Gospel, Zacchæus the unscrupulous tax collector into a conscientious man of honor, the despised Magdalene into a devoted disciple, the self-conscious John into the courageous mystic seer of Christianity. Indeed, wherever magnanimity, generosity, sympathy have been practised, in the name of the Son of Man, similar miracles of grace have been wrought.

Faith is more a function of the heart than of the head. There is no contradiction, but partnership, between the two. Faith sees a possibility with prophetic insight; reason makes it a reality. Faith penetrates through discordances and affirms

ultimate deliverances; reason pursues the path so opened up and confirms the anticipation by realization. Well might Pascal say: "The heart has reasons which reason does not know. There are truths that are felt and there are truths that are proved; for we know truth not only by the reason but by the intuitive conviction which may be called the heart." There are no ready-made solutions. But in the exercise of our privilege to investigate and to ask questions, it is faith which enables us to avoid the extremes and "steer a middle course between the Scylla of credulity and the Charybdis of scepticism." [5]

The rationalist censures faith because it does not meet the tests of his limited intellectual processes. The pietist condemns reason because it does violence to his emotional exercises. Both are superficial and do not reckon with the whole of personality. Man is not only intellect but also feeling and will, and these are to be considered not in isolation but in their interrelations. If we are to escape the pitfalls of barren intellectualism and of prostrated emotionalism, we must recognize that reason and faith are the twin guides to truth. When we imprison the reason within a Chinese

[5] E. Griffith Jones: *Providence Human and Divine*, Vol. I, p. 186 (Doran).

wall of traditionalism, we imperil the prospects of liberty. Had Cardinal Newman been familiar with the history of philosophy, the influence of this great leader might have been far more beneficial. He did not understand the prerogatives of reason as a light of the Divine Spirit, and his deference to ecclesiastical authority was not a confession of faith but of fatalism.

Faith looks at all the facts and shows patience without fear. It has regard for criticism and guards against a false reverence which withholds what is sacred from honest investigation. It has confidence in truth and is assured that the fires destroy the dross and give a richer luster to the gold. Faith is a vital quality, a dauntless virtue, a quickening spirit, a sympathetic ally. Excited zealots have jeopardized the welfare of people by their fanatic inquisitions and demoralizing persecutions. Fatalists worship the god of luck and do violence to the moral sense, by shattering the initiative of self-determination and the intrepidity of endurance, made possible by faith in an overruling Providence. Far superior to the blindness of zeal without knowledge and to the dulness of fate without thought, is the freedom of the spirit, which rejoices in the supremacy of divine wisdom. This is the assertion of faith

which discounts the paradox of the world and declares with St. Paul: "We know that to them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to his purpose." [6]

Many of our misunderstandings are due to a provincialism which discards the traditions and temperaments of peoples. The Occidental, who reasons by the methods of conceptual thinking, fails to appreciate the Oriental's picture thinking. The symbolisms so dear to Roman Catholics are discounted as superstitious accretions by prosaic Protestants. Cast-iron theories threaten to crib, coffin, and confine the variable versatilities of religious experience. We thus ride roughshod over the reverences and admirations cherished by others and are guilty of inexcusable vandalisms. We need to recover the key of imagination which is in the custody of faith. This is the visualizing power, for lack of which there is what William James referred to as "a certain blindness in human beings." It moreover is the cause of our pitiful intolerances, which refuse to give others the benefit of the doubt.

The prophet Ezekiel did a profound thing before he began his ministry among the exiles.

[6] Rom. 8:28.

He put himself in their place and established points of contact with them. "I sat where they sat" is the expressive rendering of the Authorized Version.[7] It was the most effective way to bridge the gulf between him and them. He made concessions which did not compromise the truth, but made it more lucid. This refusal to see the other side of the shield is a mark of bigotry, which fails to understand that no single group can monopolize truth which is many-sided. It also shows an absence of courtesy without which we become crude, angular, lopsided, and muddle along in a vicious circle. If we are to see the real man in the tramp, the student in the dullard, the teachable in the truculent, the saint in the sinner, we must be tutored

> "To look with feelings of fraternal love
> Upon the unassuming things that hold
> A silent station in this beauteous world." [8]

Our eagerness for quick results by short-cuts spells distrust and suspicion. "He that believeth shall not make haste," declared the statesman-prophet Isaiah to his generation which was afflicted by the half-baked policies of muddling leaders.[9] They were in a turmoil of uncertainty and un-

[7] Ezek. 3:15. [8] Wordsworth: "The Prelude," Book XIII.
[9] Isaiah 28:16.

reliability because they had become obsessed with side issues. How like the pettiness of many of our partisan controversies! These are days of hysterical sentimentalisms, fanatical programs, and superficial panaceas. Our deepest need is the calm spirit of patient discernment, to counteract the drifts, to keep us in the path of duty, and to guide us to a clear purposed goal.

The attitude of indifference is a form of selfishness which evades difficulties. The mercenary spirit shows inexcusable disregard of the rights and interests of others. The temper of curiosity is an effete dilettantism which unites intellectual dulness with moral denseness. Prejudice, allied with pessimism, makes an irrational confession that ancestry is greater than merit. Intolerance is the wilful bitterness of fear, inspired by the herd instinct and expressing itself in vehement reprisals. These are the causes of the struggles during the ages between faith and fatalism, between courage and consternation, between freedom and tyranny, between justice and iniquity, between heroism and cowardice, between truth and falsehood, between light and darkness, between God and the Devil.

The sane and humane attitude views life as a coherent unity. It shows continuity and is not sporadic. All life and all of life should, there-

fore, be developed in accord with the ideal of divine-human perfection revealed in Jesus Christ. "The Incarnation is indeed the doctrine of the divine condescension, 'he did not abhor the virgin's womb', and the purpose of this descent is to raise man's sinful and corruptible body to a pure incorruptible body. God descends that man may rise, and redemption from the sense world is the purpose of the whole scheme." [10] This is the conviction of sight and insight which magnifies spiritual rather than material possessions. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." [11]

The prophet and the apocalyptist share with the philosopher and the historian in the confidence that good shall finally triumph. It is an intolerable assumption that this is a phantom world. We are not shadows, and shadows we do not pursue. The verdict of our best judgment sustains the creative faith in the survival and enhanced enrichment of our personality by the grace of the Eternal God. The ceaseless conflict of Good and Evil must finally end. Ormazd the Radiant is to be the destined victor, and his Kingdom of Benignance will at last be firmly established. The

[10] H. W. Carr: *Changing Backgrounds in Religion and Ethics*, p. 215 (Macmillan).

[11] I John 5:4.

blatant threat of Ahriman, the Spirit of Ill, to "sow with dreadful largesse the long-hoarded woe," is calmly repelled by the assured Conqueror:

> " 'And from all this,' said Ormazd, 'shall pure fruit
> Upgrow, and odorously will I transmute
> To loveliest bloom thy gifts of deadliest bane.
> From now henceforth I wax and thou dost wane,
> I broaden and thou shrinkest.' " [12]

"Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen." [13]

### For Further Reading

Henry Jones: *A Faith That Enquires* (The Macmillan Company).

W. R. Inge: *Faith and Its Psychology* (Charles Scribner's Sons).

John Oman: *Grace and Personality* (The Macmillan Company).

Harry Emerson Fosdick: *The Meaning of Faith* (Association Press).

S. Parkes Cadman: *Imagination and Religion* (The Macmillan Company).

[12] William Watson: *The Superhuman Antagonists and Other Poems*, p. 47 (Doran).
[13] Rev. 7:12.

B. H. Streeter (Editor): *Adventure, The Faith of Science and the Science of Faith* (The Macmillan Company).

Gerald B. Smith (Editor): *Religious Thought in the Last Quarter-Century* (University of Chicago Press).

W. P. Paterson: *The Nature of Religion* (George H. Doran Company).

George Galloway: *Faith and Reason in Religion* (Charles Scribner's Sons).

## *Chapter VI: The Shining Ray*

THE literature of gloom is as thick as leaves in Vallombrosa. Modern Cassandras who utter apocalyptic predictions of disaster suffer from the illusion of finality. Their exaggerations of evil come from the vagaries and irrationalities of depression. Their rasping criticisms irritate but do not illuminate. Such a hectic temper often mistakes a friend for a foe. In the turmoil of mutual buffeting among the nations, suffering from spiritual and economic bankruptcy, forces are generated which precipitate violent suspicions and reprisals. In these trying circumstances it is well-nigh impossible to engage in sober reflection and to exercise dispassionate judgment. It is, however, practicable, if we cultivate a mind for justice and peace in a spirit of sober restraint and mellow hopefulness.

The backward look spells distrust of the present, as though the resources of man had been exhausted and we are merely existing under the momentum of the past. The upward look con-

fesses human insufficiency for the adequate discharge of the onerous tasks that await performance. The forward look acknowledges personal responsibility, to make the future brighter by sowing wheat and not tares for the harvest of tomorrow. We cannot discount the legacy of the past of good and of evil or discard the supernal influences of the Divine Spirit or disregard obligations to the next generation. This threefold relationship is to be maintained by the inspirations of hope, well characterized by the Apostle as the ripe fruit of experience, and which "never disappoints us." [1]

The Christian is an incurable meliorist. He occupies a middle ground between the optimist, who is inclined to think of the rose without the thorns, and the pessimist, who thinks of the thorns without the rose. His wholesome confidence constrains him to focus attention on the alluring ideals of perfection in Christ, and he cherishes the conviction that what has been wrested from life's wreckage is an earnest of greater fulfilments which lie in the womb of the future. As he follows "the slow foot of history," he is repeatedly persuaded that truth has triumphed over error, that righteousness has asserted its primacy over evil, that

[1] Rom. 5:5.

service has demonstrated its superiority over selfishness. His backward look is balanced by the forward look, and he is assured that day must dawn and darksome night be passed. He can thus say with Browning's "Abt Vogler":

"And what is our failure here but a triumph's evidence
For the fulness of the days? Have we withered or agonized?
Why else was the pause prolonged but that singing might issue thence?
Why rushed the discords in, but that harmony should be prized?"

The excellence of the Bible revelation is in its frank acceptance of the principle of advance. It recognizes a steady growth from less to more, from little to much, from worse to better, from crooked to straight, from slow to fast, from darkness through twilight into light which increases in fulness and splendor in the presence of Him who is the Light of life. To be sure, there are checks and setbacks, interruptions and delays, deviations and corrections, but the course is ever towards the clear purposed goal of advance. The way winds up the mountain and descends to the valley, and then travels along a level course, and next makes a trail through the jungles, but it is constantly making towards the City of God, that golden climax of perfect blessedness.

The insistent call of the Bible to faith is equaled by its diligent appeal to hope, with which to front the dawn in glad surrender to its light. "I will give the valley of Achor for a door of hope" is the promise in the prophet of Jehovah's long-suffering.[2] "I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, . . . and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the Lord," were words addressed by Jeremiah in the days of trial.[3] The herald of the Restoration announced that the glad tidings offered "a garland for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."[4] The Psalmist saw the silver lining in the cloud and was confident that "weeping may tarry for the night, but joy cometh in the morning."[5] The saints and seers of the Old Testament were made strong to stand and to withstand by this serene assurance of hope. Their outlook, in spite of adversity and hostility, was well expressed by Habakkuk the prophet:

"For though the fig tree shall not blossom,
Neither shall fruit be in the vines;
The labor of the olive shall fail,
And the fields shall yield no food;
The flock shall be cut off from the fold,
And there shall be no herd in the stalls:

[2] Hos. 2:15.
[3] Jer. 31:13.
[4] Isa. 61:3.
[5] Psalms 30:5.

Yet I will rejoice in Jehovah,
I will joy in the God of my salvation." [6]

This shining ray has a greater brilliance in the New Testament. It glorified the lives of the believers, who knew that Jesus Christ had exceeded the keenest expectations of the earlier days. The "better hope" which he brought made God more accessible. The spirit of fervent exultation broadened their horizon and gave them an encouraging vision of a world yet to be controlled by the Regnant Christ. They thought of hope as "an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast," and they keenly realized the full assurance of hope to the very end.[7] This hope was not like the baseless fabric of a dream. It was a gracious stimulation which liberated the mind, roused the conscience, quickened the emotions, and inspired the will to labor faithfully for the coming of "new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." [8] This was "the Day of the Lord" of prophecy and of apocalypse. When interpreted according to the widening perspective of history, it is understood not in terms of chronology but of character. It is the declaration of the ultimate vindication of God. Such an indefeatable conviction gave these Christians of the New Testa-

[6] Hab. 3:17 f. [7] Heb. 6:11, 19. [8] II Peter 3:13.

ment confidence in their duties, comfort in their difficulties and patient endurance unto the victorious end.

This buoyant spirit was in sharp contrast to the malignant temper of paganism. Marcus Aurelius, the consummate flower of pagan culture, confessed that this world was "mere dirt and darkness," and he hailed the day when he would get out of it. The strain of unrelieved pessimism in his *Meditations* vitiated his exhortations to unselfishness and manliness. The Epicurean summed up his philosophy of futile resignation when he declared: "Seek not to be happy, but rather to escape unhappiness; strong happiness is always linked with pain; therefore hug the safe shore and do not tempt the deeper raptures. Avoid disappointment by expecting little and by aiming low; and above all do not fret." This is the counsel of despair, which makes for cowardice and not for courage. The eclectic cults which sipped the honey from many a blossom of art, culture, ethics, philosophy, and religion appealed to the aristocracy of intellect, who regarded skepticism as a virtue and sympathy as a weakness. Human suffering was accepted as an unavoidable misfortune to be borne with passionless resignation. None of the current faiths could satisfy the deeps of the soul. They

had all reached a state of sterility, and so great was their exhaustion that gorgeous ritual and elaborate ceremonial were merely routine performances. The emptiness and defeat of religion inevitably reacted on social and economic life. "In no period," wrote Lecky, "had brute force more completely triumphed, in none was the thirst for material advantages more intense, in very few was vice more ostentatiously glorified." The darkness was partially relieved by some elect spirits, but their humane efforts were limited by the Greek idea of moderation which found no room for enthusiasm. There was one alleviating feature. It was the widespread spirit of expectancy that a change for the better was imminent, which would divert the course of an exhausted world towards revival and rejuvenation.

This was the nervous atmosphere into which Christianity came. The Gospel was a challenge to the listlessness and heartlessness of those who were suffering from *ennui* in the upper strata of society. It appealed persuasively to the seekers after God, who had vainly tried to find Him. It offered the promise of hope to the toiling and oppressed masses, whose prospects were depressingly somber in the millround of cruel and uncontrollable circumstances. Its ineradicable

hopefulness overmatched the boisterous and insolent distempers of that day. The glorious efficacy of the Christian redemption was convincingly advertised by Christian living. It fluently testified to the higher moral sanctions, the richer spiritual realizations, the deeper religious compulsions which swayed the Christians. Every walk of life was ultimately to be quickened by the refreshing tides of the Divine Spirit. Nowhere did the gloom and despair yield so completely to the deliverance and gladness of Christianity as in the nobler views of immortality. The undying hope of eternal life was well symbolized by the cock, the herald of the dawn. A significant change was made when the skull and cross-bones were supplanted by decorations of the lily, with inscriptions declaring the assurance of resurrection and the life eternal. Contrast the pathos of the pagan confession: "Drink now to my memory and wish that the earth may be light on me," with the sublimity of the Christian sentiment: "To her sweet nurse, Paulina, who dwells in Christ among the blest."

In *Marius the Epicurean,* Walter Pater has drawn a memorable picture. Marius is introduced to an assembly of Christian believers. Among them were differences of rank, age, and associa-

tion, but their faces were strangely transfigured. "Was some credible message from beyond 'the flaming rampart of the world'—a message of hope, regarding the place of men's souls and their interest in the sum of things—already moulding anew their very bodies and looks and voices, now and here? At least there was a cleansing and kindling flame at work in them, which seemed to make everything else Marius had ever known look comparatively vulgar and mean." In this company he was at least able to understand the secret of his friend Cornelius, whose way was so pleasant through the world.[9] Indeed, similar exhibitions of radiant strength have been witnessed in every age of Christian history. The hazards of losses were serious but their contemplation was without the peradventure of fear because they distinguished between the permanent and the passing in a distracted world of crisis and catastrophe. There were seers, like the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, whose penetrating vision enabled them to assert, in the words of Professor Rendel Harris, that, "the rocks were not burning and showed no signs of passing away." What they possessed in the early centuries and in later times is what we need to-day. It is a richer conception

[9] Walter Pater: *Marius the Epicurean*, Ch. XXIII (Macmillan).

of God, which makes room for him everywhere, even at the cost of dismissing many things which attract our interest and absorb our attention.

This outburst of hope brought the springtime in the dead of winter, so that in the garden of Christian souls there bloomed the spiritual flowers of rare beauty and fragrance. Many of these believers were "unlearned and ignorant," after the fashion of the schools; but there was such an intensifying of the inner life that they received a wonderful spaciousness of mind and a genial exuberance of spirit. The pessimist suffers from disillusion without a sequel. He is so oppressed by evil that he is incapable of taking expansive views. His sky is, moreover, darkened by the dust he has stirred up and which well-nigh chokes him and others. The optimist is infected by delusion and discards the disagreeable facts, as though a facile ignoring of them would lead to their disappearance. The pessimist and the optimist both lack the ability to play fair. They are on the bias of prejudice, and they erect their building without the aid of square, level, and plumb. It is doomed to fall. The meliorist has a discerning temper, for he sees that "the darkness is passing away, and the true light already shineth." [10] He believes

[10] I John 2:8.

that the wounds of humanity can be cured; that they who are flung into the abyss do have deliverance; that the waste must be reclaimed, the void filled, the gulf bridged, the wrongs righted. He is convinced that God has not left this world to the despair of its own delusions nor will the divine purpose of redemption in the Incarnate Christ be defeated. The Christian ethic regards hope as an indispensable stimulus. Its unwavering assurance, even in days of deepest humiliation and direst defeat, was forcibly expressed by the Greek cryptogram, IXNIKA, which translated means *Jesus Christ conquers.* It was placed on the bronze gates of Saint Sophia, Constantinople, and it was treated with scorn by the Ottoman conquerors, when Christianity fell before Islam in the fifteenth century. But it remains a sure word of prophecy of the ultimate triumph of the Cross over the Crescent and over all other symbols of religious hope.

Gloomy utterances about the failure of Christianity have always been heard in times of disturbance. Unworthy elements have doubtless been associated with its presentation, and even the best exponents of its truths have been faulty because of clouded vision and imperfect understanding. Erroneous ideas and mistaken impressions

of science and philosophy have often led the leaders of the Church to oppose as perversions what later proved to be illuminations of the Gospel. Such dismal episodes do not reflect upon Christianity but upon its interpreters. The error of Constantine in the fourth century has been repeated in every age, in trying to make a compact between the Church and the world. The compromise has invariably been disastrous to the deepest concerns of religion. The criticism of the Emperor Julian in this same period, that Christianity is essentially pessimistic, was due to the ascetic fanaticism of well-meaning but misinformed Christians, whose impulsive behavior precipitated needless oppositions.[11] Such unfortunate experiences have time and again dulled the exquisite light of Christianity, nor have we greatly advanced beyond similar repetitions. The fact that we are seriously aware of these perils is an auspicious sign of the better prospects.[12]

Rousseau relates that in the eighteenth century the Grandees of Venice welcomed a Spanish envoy, and in honor of the occasion they exhibited their treasures on a high table in the Doge's palace. The Spaniard knew of the declining fortunes of the

[11] *Cf.* Edward Lucas White: *Why Rome Fell*, p. 296 ff (Harpers).
[12] *Cf. The Future of Christianity.* Edited by Sir James Marchant (Harpers).

Venetian Republic, and stooping to look below the table, he remarked with rude frankness, "Your wealth seems to have no roots." The wealth of Christianity is in its spiritual resources, which are rooted and grounded in God the Impregnable, the Invincible, the Inviolable, revealed in Jesus Christ the Adorable Redeemer of mankind. Since He girds and guides us, the odds can never go against us. The memorable lines of Arthur Hugh Clough are at once a rebuke to despondency, and a reminder of the sources of victory:

"Say not, the struggle nought availeth,
The labour and the wounds are vain,
The enemy faints not, nor faileth,
And as things have been they remain.

"If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars;
It may be, in yon smoke concealed,
Your comrades chase e'en now the fliers,
And, but for you, possess the field.

"For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
Seem here no painful inch to gain,
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
Comes silent, flooding in, the main.

"And not by eastern windows only,
When daylight comes, comes in the light,

In front, the sun climbs slow, how slowly,
But westward look, the land is bright." [13]

What some critics call the paralysis of civilization is not due to the accumulated results of decadence that threaten disruption. It is rather due to maladaptations caused by inability to understand the actual situation, by hasty generalizations about cause and effect, and by confusion in the presence of the multitudinous demands made by economic and other changes. Eulogists of the past are wanting in historical perspective. Their slogan is "Back to Methuselah." It is hardly credible that these sensational panegyrists really desire a return of conditions which prevailed during the Elizabethan or even the Victorian era. Who craves for their drab pieties, illiterate majorities, ecclesiastical intolerances, political snobberies, unctuous self-complacencies, and other practices of moral and social ugliness? These things appeared simultaneously with the magnificent achievements in art, literature, and religion. But we cannot ignore the former and concentrate on the latter, which represented the output of a very small minority. If the present age is not producing men of extraordinary caliber, may it not be because the average attainments of the rank and file have so

[13] Arthur Hugh Clough: *Poems*, p. 452 (Macmillan).

largely advanced that it requires almost superhuman abilities for anyone to stand head and shoulders above his contemporaries?

Civilization, as popularly understood, refers almost exclusively to material benefits. Such a conception is inevitable in a machine age, but it overlooks the ethical and spiritual elements which belong to the warp and woof of mankind's well-being. Dr. Albert Schweitzer is nearer the truth that civilization is "the summary and content of all real advances of man and of society in all fields and in every direction in so far as these are subordinate to the spiritual fulfilment of the individual as being the real goal of all progress." Schweitzer is convinced that civilization is distinctly ethical, and that "reverence for life" is the foundation principle, which alone can restore peace and stability to a disunited world. He is right that the Western World is intoxicated by activity which prejudices reflection, and that it is suffering from a lack of spiritual independence. But he is wrong in concluding that there are no traces of progressive ethical development in the modern world.[14]

Some of the defects of premature specializing

[14] Albert Schweitzer: *Civilization and Ethics*, p. 8; *The Decay and the Restoration of Civilization*, p. 27 ff (Macmillan).

are seen in Oswald Spengler's volume, *The Decline of the West*. His analogical method of interpretation presents a view of history that is lopsided. The law of civilization, according to his showing, is fixed and it works in cosmic cycles. It is easy, therefore, to predict that Western civilization has entered upon its last stages and that its doom is sealed. Such a dogma of fatalism discards the human factor, and denies the freedom of the will even within limitations. The verdict of history is against the idea that men are puppets, nor is it credible that the travail of the centuries is destined to slope down the shadows into disaster. Viscount Bryce takes a more wholesome view of the situation. "Throughout the course of history every winter of despondency has been followed by a joyous springtime of hope. Hope, often disappointed but always renewed, is the anchor by which the ship that carries democracy and its fortunes will have to ride out this latest storm as it has ridden out many storms before. Democracy will never perish till after Hope has expired." [15]

It is needless to advertise the cynical jeremiads of other writers. Regrets and lamentations are their stock in trade, and their noisy speech is a

[15] James Bryce: *Modern Democracies*, Vol. II, p. 609 (Macmillan).

futile attempt to disguise bankruptcy of thought and poverty of resourcefulness. "The idea of a law of degeneracy," wrote Sir John Robert Seeley, "of a 'fatal drift towards the worm' is as obsolete as astrology or the belief in witchcraft." There is, however, a revival of this erratic idea in our own day, and it has found expression in two obstructions to genuine progress. One is intolerance, which is an evidence of weakness impelled by fear of change; the other is indifference, which is a mark of dullness caused by ignorance of the real issues involved. They must be met in the amity of impartial discussion, conducted not to carry a point or to defend a position but to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the whole truth. Has not the day come for the ending of sectarian shibboleths in theology, philosophy, and history? Should we not adjust our perspective and cease "specializing in irrelevancies"? The cultivation of the open mind, which is broad and deep, does not imply an undiscerning hospitality to all comers. It shows a vital regard for truth, in keeping with the apostolic counsel: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." [16]

This surely is the spirit of hope, which knows the pressure of difficulties but has the powers of

[16] I Thess. 5:21.

revival and survival. A character in Thucydides well said of hope: "She is a mistress by nature spendthrift. The man who harbors her knows her not till all else is lost, and she has left him no time to beware of her." In spite of what is said to the contrary, "the spirit that animates our race to-day is the spirit that has animated English poetry itself from those earliest days when its virile speech, unintelligible now, embodied the same indomitable will that yet looks on tempests and is never shaken." This is the Anglo-Saxon tradition, enshrined in that old poem the "Battle of Maldon," where a veteran warrior nerved his dwindling comrades by saying, "Purpose shall be the sterner, heart the bolder, courage the more, as our strength littleth." [17] Nothing can withstand such a hopeful and heroic temper. It is not due merely to a sanguine temperament which is often apt to be superficial. It is the result of confidence in the equity and veracity of our cause, which braces us for new tasks, new loyalties, new achievements. "Somebody drew blank," wrote Dan Crawford, "when he said that Hope makes a good breakfast but a bad supper, for there is no throb of joy akin to the darkest hour merging

[17] John Livingstone Lowes: *Convention and Revolt in Poetry*, pp. 339, 341 (Houghton Mifflin).

into dawn." Men of this dauntless disposition think of "impossible" as "a blockhead of a word." They accept conventional standards of ability with a large grain of the salt of humor, and meet opposition with serene self-possession.

Christianity rejoices in the vibrant notes of hope and has nothing to do with the mordant tones of despair. It knows better than any other religion that "a golden age cannot be made by leaden people." Its followers "dared great things, for they cherished the hope that maketh not ashamed." And they were justified in hoping that one conquest was the prelude to yet other conquests. They knew that the future was uncertain, but they looked beyond the uncertainties and converted perplexity into persuasion. The mediæval sculptor conceived of despair as "a female figure thrusting a dagger into her throat, and tearing her long hair, which flows down among the leaves of the capital below her knees." The inscription below it is, "Desperacio Môs Crudelis," a sentiment which Ruskin rightly calls a vice. The person who has lost hope has committed moral suicide. The modern artist, George Frederick Watts, in his great painting of "Hope," delivers the Christian message. The careworn pilgrim is seated on the summit of a globe with

a yawning abyss below. Though her eyes are bandaged, her ears are open to the music of the evangel, and her right hand lightly touches the last unbroken string of the lyre. In the distance there shines a lone star, whose luminous light, unseen by the lonely traveler, yet falls upon her. This is not a picture of despair but of hope, which gave her access to internal resources that time nor tide could wrest from her:

> . . . "Hope, invincible, immortal,
> Through whom the stricken soul may yet descry,
> Far out beyond Life's pain and mystery
> The open doors of some celestial portal." [18]

The dynamic of hope is what our age sorely needs. Beset by skepticism and cynicism, we live under darkening skies, and the shadows of terror oppress us. "The tents have been struck and the great caravan of humanity is once more on the march." If we regard history as "a guide to wise conduct and the only key to humane and intelligent policies," and if we reckon with a divine Providence in the direction and disposal of human affairs, then the upheavals and changes that are yet bound to come could be viewed without the panic of mistrust, and with the firm assurance of

[18] H. W. Shrewsbury: *The Visions of an Artist*, p. 61 (London: C. H. Kelly).

hope that we are traveling, not towards the City of Death but towards the City of God. The thought is well expressed by John Bunyan, the tercentenary of whose birth is celebrated this year. When Christian got to the borders of the Shadow of Death, he was met by two men in dismay, who tried to dissuade him from going on. "But what have you seen?" said Christian. "Seen!" said they: "Why, the valley itself, which is as dark as pitch; we also saw there the hobgoblins, satyrs and dragons of the pit; we heard also in that valley a continual howling and yelling, as of a people under unutterable misery, who there sat bound in affliction and irons; and over that valley hang the discouraging clouds of confusion. Death also doth always spread his wings over it. In a word, it is every whit dreadful, being utterly without order." *"Then,"* said Christian, *"I perceive not yet, by what you have said, but that this is my way to the desired haven."*

### For Further Reading

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## *Chapter VII: The Supreme Constraint*

IT IS refreshing to turn from the outworks to the central citadels of Christianity and to be assured that they are still secure. Fears were entertained that these would be disintegrated by science, criticism, and philosophy. The attacks have destroyed some of the walls that were crumbling with age, but after the dust of conflict settled it was discovered that the belligerents had rendered a timely service. The overtures for partnership and comity are now under way. The undertakings of understanding are moving apace without garish displays. They who read the signs of the times are persuaded that these interchanges are indications that relationships are to be established on spiritual foundations.

In these circumstances, we need to recover the sense of wonderment so germane to the Christian life. The Light still shines, the Bush is yet aflame, the most excellent Glory abides. The deeper experience of these inner realities will show us how to offer hospitality to the radiance of the mystical

vision, to the joys of emotional fervor, to the pressure of ethical demands, to the quest after intellectual clarity. A due appreciation of them is adequately obtained when we hold before us the symmetry and perfection of Jesus Christ. He is neither ascetic nor æsthetic, neither individualist nor collectivist, neither idealist nor realist, in any exclusive sense. He comprehends and transcends both for the furtherance of love, liberty and loyalty, without vagaries and eccentricities. They who share this totality of experience will give evidence of it by a loftiness of soul, enriched by serene converse with the Highest, which is God, and by spontaneous generosity towards mankind. They will thus show themselves to be at home in every clime and condition, and go through life without getting used up.

All attempts to unify human experiences on a non-theistic basis have failed. Man does not live in a self-contained universe. The frontiers extend beyond the human into superhuman realms, as the voice of religion has insistently and justifiably declared. We indulge in illusive idealism when we think of a non-human cosmos on which man depends, as though it were a blind force, an unconscious energy, a universal principle of life

immanent in all sentient existence, or a pictorial representation of the group mind. We cannot maintain the permanent values of knowledge, truth, and love by positing a metaphysical abstraction and calling it God. It is as futile to receive inspiration from such a tantalizing nonentity, as it is for man to lift himself with his boot-strings. We must do what Pascal did and bring our concepts to the practical tests of a living experience. We shall then learn, as Wordsworth did, that all lasting grandeur subsists by love, which is hallowed by the lambent flame of a still higher love.

> " . . . love that breathes not without awe;
> Love that adores, but on the knees of prayer,
> By heaven inspired; that frees from chains the soul,
> Lifted, in union with the purest, best,
> Of earth-born passions, on the wings of praise
> Bearing a tribute to the Almighty's Throne." [1]

Indeed, it is to the poets and not to the philosophers or theologians that we turn for the deepest understanding of life's most fruitful inspiration. Their cosmogonies may well be set aside, as doubtless ours will be by a later generation. But far more important than these tentative theories of speculation is the permanent principle that has always regulated the practices of man-

[1] Wordsworth: "The Prelude," Book XIV.

kind at their best. It rings with accents true in the *Divina Commedia* of Dante. The "Inferno" is the vision of failure and of despair due to lack of love. The "Purgatorio" is the vision of educative discipline and resurgent hope under the purifying processes of love. The "Paradiso" is the vision of deliverance and perfection in the sublime triumph of "love divine, all loves excelling." It is set forth with epic grandeur in Milton's "Paradise Lost" and "Paradise Regained." It is the burden of Tennyson's "In Memoriam," which celebrates the goodness and power of "Immortal Love." It is the keynote of Browning's message, which repeatedly magnifies the compulsion and supremacy of love, as seen in the confession of "Paracelsus," of what he had missed in his career:

"I saw Aprile—my Aprile there!
And as the poor melodious wretch disburdened
His heart, and moaned his weakness in my ear,
I learned my own deep error; love's undoing
Taught me the worth of love in man's estate,
And what proportion love should hold with power
In his right constitution; love preceding
Power, and with much power, always much more love;
Love still too straitened in his present means,
And earnest for new power to set love free."

Any person with the poetic sense will understand what Henry Drummond meant by the undertone of love in Creation. "Remember that nearly all the beauty of the world is Love-Beauty —the corolla of the flower and the plume of the grass, the lamp of the firefly, the plumage of the bird, the horn of the stag, the face of a woman; that nearly all the music of the natural world is Love-music—the song of the nightingale, the call of the mammal, the chorus of the insect, the serenade of the lover; that nearly all the foods of the world are Love-foods—the date and the raisin, the banana and the bread-fruit, the locust and the honey, the eggs, the grains, the seeds, the cereals, and the legumes; that all the drinks of the world are Love-drinks—the juice of the sprouting grain and the withered hop, the milk from the udder of the cow, the wine from the Love-cup of the vine. Remember that the Family, the crown of all higher life, is the creation of Love; that Co-operation, which means power, which means wealth, which means leisure, which therefore means art and culture, recreation and education, is the Gift of Love. Remember not only these things but the diffusions of feeling which accompany them, the elevations, the ideals, the happiness, the goodness, and the faith in more goodness, and ask if it is not a world

of Love in which we live."[2] There is assuredly the darker side of "Nature red in tooth and claw," which includes the displacements and desolations caused by human nature. But these exhibitions of perversion and penury, with their fruits of nightmare ugliness, demonstrate all the more conclusively the superiority and opulence of Love.

The supreme distinction of Christianity is its frank treatment of the problem of evil and suffering. Many perplexed Christians, not to speak of others, are hard-pressed to understand the love of God in a world where brutal passions and demonic exploitations are rife, where men are penalized and victimized to feather the nests of tyrants and traitors. These tragic enigmas are further complicated by the two truths of divine sovereignty and human freedom. What explanations are there to lessen our blank misgivings and querulous questionings, and to lead us out of obstinate dilemmas? The Hindu doctrine of Karma explains the fact of pain and suffering as punishment for sins committed in some previous existence, but human experience rejects this evasion. The Old Testament solution went beyond mere justice, as in the classic utterance of the Book of Job, and of Isaiah in chapter fifty-

[2] Henry Drummond: *The Ascent of Man*, p. 232.

three. Its insistence that the purpose of the universe is redemptive received unique expression in the Cross of Christ, which gave a new vision of God, entering into the world's pain and breaking the power of sin. This truth of vicarious suffering, focused in the Cross, gives us a better understanding of the discipline of pain, of the service of suffering, of the tragedy of sin, of the power of redemption. And yet there is no ready-made solution equally applicable to all. Each case must be considered on its own merits.

When we turn from conflicting theories and reckon with Christian experience, *ubique, semper et ab omnibus*, we see that the revelation of the love of God in the Incarnation and Atonement of Christ has offered an appeal unequaled in its power to quicken the imagination and to produce a radical change in human nature. The fellowship with this God of love imparted an inward peace, which stimulated harmony and enabled men to meet life's discordances with the fortitude of endurance. "The greatest minds of our race have found a peace almost too deep for utterance in realizing and accepting the inevitable order of the world. They are at once lost and uplifted in something unimaginably greater than themselves, and the words in which they utter their experi-

ence go deeper than ever plummet sounded."[3] It is not a fatalistic surrender to the inevitable but an energetic exercise of the soul, which penetrates to the heart of things and affirms ultimate deliverances by the grace of God. It was not the diseased introspection of an abnormal mind, but the healthy insight of a bracing spirit, which led Charles Wesley to praise God with joyful gratitude and exultant praise.

"Thy goodness and Thy truth to me,
To every soul abound;
A vast unfathomable sea,
Where all our thoughts are drowned.

Throughout the universe it reigns;
Unalterably sure:
And while the Truth of God remains,
The goodness must endure."

The field of ethics has considerably widened to include all human interests, but it has not gone beyond the bounds of the Incarnate Son of God. The study of ethics is not pedantic and priggish nor is it concerned with the artificial distinctions of casuistry. It is intensely practical and bears upon attitudes and activities everywhere. As a science it deals with normative standards that regu-

[3] James Denney: *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, p. 2 (Doran).

late the laws of life for its highest good. As an art it has to do with methods by which we adjust ourselves to the ever-changing order, to control it for the safe of worthwhile conduct. A comparative study of ethics leads to the conclusion that the best and last word is spoken by Christianity. It teaches that religion and morals cannot be divorced without peril, since they touch complementary aspects of life; that the Gospel of Christ offers the highest ideal and the most effective dynamic for right living; that the superiority of the Christian ethic is verified by the type of character it produces. Let it be conceded that Christianity has always suffered more from inconsistency than from infidelity, and that a wide gulf still exists between reverence for its ideals and the realization of them. The causes of these lamentable lapses are not wholly due to hypocrisy. Professor W. P. Paterson well said that "nothing is so common as for us to misunderstand our own motives." May not the disparities and defects which have marred the lives of Christians be occasioned both by their confusion of understanding and by their unwillingness to obey the Christian mandates?

It is one of the accepted canons among scholars that a religion must be judged by its best results

and not by its sordid imperfections. That is to say, the supreme test of any religion is its ability to produce saints—those men and women who scorn the miserable aims that end with self, and whose transformed personalities influence our lives towards the issues of justice, mercy, and truth. Consider the calendar of the saints of every religion. To which one shall we yield the palm? Not to the Buddhist saint, whose joyless outlook makes more of monastic privileges than of social duties. Not to the Hindu saint, who attains perfection by renouncing his personality which is immersed and lost in Brahm. Not to the Mohammedan saint, whose fatal fatalism and rabid fanaticism make him incapable of wholesome initiative and responsible independence. Not to the Confucianist saint, who travels in a circle without the inspiration of prayer or the need for advance towards a better future. Not to the Shintoist saint, whose faith is a form of fervent and unbalanced patriotism. Not to the Zoroastrian saint, who acknowledges a persistent dualism between light and darkness and knows nothing of suffering or of love. Not to the Hebrew saint, who comes nearest to the light of love but who does not go much beyond nationalistic bounds.

It is the Christian saint who understands and

practises goodness in all its bearings. This virtue stresses the thought that the life of all is inextricably involved in the life of each, and the welfare of each in the well-being of all. The Christian thus goes beyond the ideal of the prophet: "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jehovah require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God?"[4] He is guided by the more comprehensive constraint of Jesus Christ: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself."[5] His conception of neighbor was described in the memorable parable of "The Good Samaritan," which lifted the question outside of ritualistic, legal, ecclesiastical, national considerations, and placed it for ever on the basis of human need.[6]

This Creative Love is exhibited in the universe, not only by the activities of mind and the energies of power but chiefly by the fulfilments of the persistent purpose of redemption. It is not a weakly amiable trait, sentimental and superficial, but a distinctively impartial virtue which insists on fair play. It has a sense of appreciation which takes note of life's backgrounds and discovers the possi-

[4] Micah 6:8. [5] Luke 10:27. [6] Luke 10:30 ff.

bilities of unlimited progress towards perfection, where a calculating disposition sees only hopeless defects and repellent distortions. It is not force but forbearance, and its point of strain is expressive rather than repressive. It restrains from negative impulses which destroy, and it constrains the positive passions which give enlightenment to the perplexed, encouragement to the troubled, consolement to the distressed. Doors are thus opened into the largest realizations of life's best benefits.

Love is not a matter of capricious moods or of vagrant words, but of stable deeds. The person who gushes disguises his actual spirit and confuses the feelings of the moment with the compulsions of sober hours. Love is the great harmonizer, healing the breaches, uniting factions, overcoming prejudices, and spreading good-will. It meets our deepest needs and answers every problem which is thought through under its illuminating torch. Even the dark pages of history cease to be so bewildering, when read with the mature understanding and mellow wisdom of love. This is how Browning understood it:

"Wanting is—what?
Summer redundant,
Blueness abundant,
—Where is the blot?

Beamy the world, yet a blank all the same,
—Framework which waits for a picture to frame:
What of the leafage, what of the flower?
Roses embowering, with naught they embower!
Come then, complete incompletion, O comer,
Pant through the blueness, perfect the summer!
Breathe but one breath
Rose-beauty above,
And all that was death
Grows life, grows love,
Grows love!"

This love is virtually the same, whether divine or human, and it was fully exhibited with the coming of Jesus Christ. He liberated its enchained power, and the imprisoned splendor was released to flood the world with its vitalizing light. It was like the breath of the fragrance of wind-swept flowers, healing and refreshing. It was something new in that pagan world which knew pity. It did not know love, which is the germinating seed of fellowship, liberty, loyalty, sacrifice, and service. They in whom it was implanted spoke the melodious language of deeds, understood by all races. There were occasional lapses into the gibberish of stupidity and jealousy, rightly termed by James Barrie as "the two black spots in human nature which, more than love of money, are at the root of all evil." Such was the case in the

Church of Corinth where some of its members were excitable and inflammable, factious and boisterous, intent on having their own way. To them St. Paul chanted his pæan of love in words that have "outlasted the marble and the bronzes of the Empire, because they had an unassailable refuge in the secret depths of the soul of the people." [7]

It was this language of love which was more frequently spoken by the Christians, and it had the same meaning upon the lips of Hebrew, Greek, Roman, and those of other tongues. "But it was more than a language, it was a thing of power and of action. The Christians really considered themselves brothers and sisters, and their actions corresponded to this belief. . . . The Gospel thus became a social message. The preaching which laid hold of the outer man, detaching him from the world, and uniting him to his God, was also a preaching of solidarity and brotherliness." [8] On this point Harnack quotes from contemporary pagan and Christian writers. Similar testimonies might be produced from subsequent centuries. But let one suffice from our own times, in proof that the motive and momentum of love are still

[7] A. Deissmann: *Light from the Ancient East*, p. 391 (Doran).

[8] A. Harnack: *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity*, Vol. I, p. 149 (Putnam).

the differentiating attractions of Christianity. "Long ago the heathen exclaimed at the mutual love of Christians. They do so today; when a man, and still more perhaps a woman, is fairly introduced and made at home in the circle where all are 'brothers' and 'sisters,' it must be difficult to break off from Christianity."[9]

Can this language of love be spoken in the world as at present constituted? Do we not indulge in the casuistry of the cloister when we talk about self-denial and self-suppression? How is it possible to reconcile self-denial with self-development? Are we not guilty of wanting to coerce others into the acceptance of a standard of living which we repudiate for ourselves? Was Nietzsche justified in scorning what he called the slave-morality of Christianity? Are we not exposed to the charge of cowardice which surrenders honor and self-respect, when we undertake to love our enemies and pray for those who exploit us? Is competition such an unmitigated evil that it should be completely renounced in favor of coöperation? Are we quixotic and impracticable if we surrender our rights for the sake of a principle and for the general good? When we yield to the weak brother

[9] Campbell Moody: *The Heathen Heart*, p. 137 (Hodder & Stoughton).

with a sensitive conscience, are we not intensifying a greedy and grasping disposition in him? If we live unselfishly and generously, are we not taken advantage of by those who unscrupulously advance themselves at our expense? Is it not fatuous to attempt to apply to our complex modern society a principle given for the guidance of the individual in the rural conditions of the ancient and Oriental world? Do not those who denounce war live in a utopian world of make-believe and sham? Can we seriously consider proposals for the union of the churches, which are apparently spiritual but actually economic, and which indicate no intention on the part of the proponents to practise self-renunciation? Are not many of the suggestions for peace merely the camouflaged vagaries of platform speakers, whose generalizations ignore incontrovertible facts? These are questions which challenge our keenest thought, and they cannot be answered by vague assertions or by benevolent gestures.

We believe that the Christian ethic is determined by the redemptive principle of love in Jesus Christ. It is not a form of pity which is often a mark of senile weakness and of moral anæmia. It is an attitude of appreciative understanding, based upon the conservation and the transvalua-

tion of values, which emphasize reverence for all life. Love distinguishes between sympathy and sentimentalism, between forgiveness and the condoning of wrong-doing, between good-will and mere good-nature. It shows kindness with due regard to justice. It combines the tenderness of compassion with the austerity of holiness. It insists on a wise discipline, marked by equity and dignity, morality and spirituality. It reconciles egoism and altruism in a higher mutuality. This is manifestly according to the apostolic ideal of comprehension without compromise: "Never acting for private ends or from vanity, but humbly considering each other the better man, and each with an eye to the interests of others as well as to his own." [10] Such a spirit "constrains all, in whatever walk of life they may find themselves, to busy themselves intimately with all the human and vital processes which are being played out around them, and to give themselves as men to the man who needs help and sympathy." [11]

We have reached an *impasse* in the life of the nations because the way of brutal force has dominated the transactions of the peoples. The lessons of the War have virtually been scrapped. In spite

[10] Philippians 2:3 (Moffatt's translation).
[11] A. Schweitzer: *Civilization and Ethics*, p. 269 (Macmillan).

of the numerous proposals for peace, plans are being perfected to annihilate combatants in time of war, which for heartless cruelty exceed the worst barbarisms of ancient times. Dean Inge is not exaggerating when he declares: "There is something radically wrong with a civilization which can thus deliberately return to the worst traditions of savagery. Frankly, I do not understand it, and I am amazed by the acquiescence of the civilized world in this appalling and suicidal relapse." The same spirit which impels militarism is seen in the animations of nationalism, commercialism, industrialism, and other forms of vehement antagonisms in racial strife, social discord, religious rivalry.

In his paradoxical way, Chesterton rightly said that Christianity has not been tried and found wanting; it has not been tried because it is found difficult. But is not the exacting and ennobling character of the Christian ethic a reason for its intelligent and courageous acceptance? Whatever may be said to the contrary, where do we have a more complete, considerate, and comprehensive standard of living for the individual and for society than that given by Jesus Christ? Schweitzer's conclusion reflects the primacy of the program of Christianity. "At the present time when violence,

clothed in life, dominates the world more cruelly than it has ever before, I still remain convinced that truth, love, peaceableness, meekness, and kindness are the violence which can master all other violence. The world will be theirs as soon as ever a sufficient number of men with purity of heart, with strength and with perseverance think and live out the thoughts of love and truth, of meekness and peaceableness." [12]

We have tried the ways of hostility and brutality, of fear and suspicion, of intimidation and exploitation, of selfishness and rivalry. They have checkmated the progress of nations by tragic retaliations and bitter reprisals. They are weighed in the balances and found wanting. If we continue these ways in perverse obstinacy, the future offers us nothing but dust and ashes. Should we not have the courage to give a fair trial to the way of Jesus Christ? We can do so, if we cease quibbling in the jejune fashion of straining out the gnat and swallowing the camel. They who have adopted the methods of love have never had any cause for regret, while the supporters of loveless methods have had nothing but regrets and disappointments. To be sure, it is a perilous way, but

[12] Albert Schweitzer: *Memoirs of Childhood and Youth*, p. 102 (Macmillan).

it has always led to the profoundest satisfactions. It is the way of God and there have been no final failures. Nothing will turn the tide away from the bitterness of aggression and the desolation of animosity, except a renaissance of the spirit of love which is the supreme gift of the Gospel of Christ. It is the only effective way of quest that leads to conquest. *Ave crux spes unica.*

"Ay, and when prophecy her tale hath finished,
Knowledge hath withered from the trembling tongue,
Love shall survive and Love be undiminished,
Love be imperishable, Love be young." [13]

### For Further Reading

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[13] F. W. H. Myers: *Saint Paul*, p. 29 (Macmillan).

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## *Chapter VIII: The Choral Strain*

THERE are two views of this world. One regards it as a swamp to be crossed as quickly as possible, the other regards it as a marsh to be drained. Professor J. Arthur Thomson, after a thorough study of Animate Nature, emphatically accepts the latter view. He also declares that "evolution on the whole is integrative, not disintegrative." Man is the builder and his successful struggle against obstacles has been conditioned on his mastery of himself. It is interesting to be reminded, from the standpoints of physiology and biology, that we need to make more of the well-springs of joy in the world. "Pleasant emotions favor the secretion of the digestive juices, the rhythmic movements of the food-canal, and the absorption of the aliment." Play is not merely a safety-valve for excess of energy, an opportunity for relaxation and recapitulation. It is "a joyous apprenticeship to the business of life, a time for replacing instinctive predispositions by learning from experience, a time of elbow-room for varia-

tions, a time for experimenting before criticisms prune, before casualties induce caution, and before hard work brings on 'live-harming heaviness.'"[1]

It is gratifying to have an authoritative scientist independently confirm the wholesome teaching of the Bible on the subject of gladness and joyousness. Indeed, the Bible is the most hilarious book in all the literature of religion. There is a continual insistence upon joy, not as a flippant but a flamboyant experience. There is something gorgeous about its celebrations, which remind one of the outburst of Nature in the springtime. Joy is not a fleeting and vanishing affair determined by external conditions. It is a permanent experience which is increasingly enriched by the trying processes of what some regard as "the heavy and weary weight of all this unintelligible world." It reckons with the facts of depression and of deliverance. To be sure, it pitches upon the minor key in its music, but the final note is set to the major key. The sad cadences end in jubilation. Here are a few sentences which substantiate this claim for the Bible: "In thy presence is fulness of joy." "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of

[1] J. Arthur Thomson: *The System of Animate Nature.* Vol. II, p. 621 ff (Henry Holt and Company).

salvation." "I will turn their mourning into joy." "The joy of the Lord is your strength."[2] The New Testament is even more assuring: "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be fulfilled." "The disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit." "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice." "Ye rejoice greatly with joy unspeakable and full of glory."[3]

The remarkable fact about it is that this exultant joy of the Christians was often exhibited under adverse circumstances. It was a joy *in* sorrow, *for* sorrow, and *after* sorrow. "A doubting man like him who wrote Ecclesiastes," said George Macdonald, "puts the evil last, and says 'the clouds return after the rain'; but the Christian knows that one has mastery who makes the joy the last in every song." Their hearts were fixed, trusting in God, and so these men who were possessed of the fervor of faith, the heartiness of hope, the liberty of love, gave evidence thereof by the exuberance of gladness. Joy was always the last word in their testimony. After mentioning his persecutions and sufferings, the Apostle declared: "And out of them all the Lord delivered me."[4]

[2] Psalms 16:11; Isa. 12:3; Jer. 31:13; Neh. 8:10.
[3] John 15:11; Acts 13:52; Phil. 4:4; I Peter 1:8.
[4] II Tim. 3:11.

This joy was the tonic that gave tone and temper to their affections, aspirations, and achievements. Drudgery became endurable, hard tasks were practicable, difficulties were conquerable because of the radiant energy which quickened them to "carry on," until the last load was lifted and the last lap of the journey was ended.

The behavior of an individual in a crisis shows whether he has mastered his untoward circumstances or whether they have mastered him. How much is he able to stand in such an adverse environment? Does he manifest courage or cowardice, endurance or weakening, in the presence of distracting difficulties? Does he bear his burdens with patient fortitude or with restless discontent? Does he become cynical over disappointment, or regard it as one of the unavoidable incidents in life, not intended necessarily to hurt him but perchance to be the key that opens the door into fortune? Does he hold himself in control when disaster overtakes him, or does he give loose rein to his passions and indulge in bitterness, scorn, and invective? In short, does he face life with a morning face refreshed after the night's rest, or is it with the evening face, tired and exhausted after the day's racking toil? If he proves himself master of the situation, his creed fits him like

a tailor-made suit; but if he loses his balance and gets unnerved, his creed, however finely formulated, looks like a shabby suit of clothes, good enough for a rummage sale. That is to say, a man reveals his creed by his conduct.

This test of religious integrity gives Christianity the premier position. It came into the ancient world at a time of almost universal negation and despair. In the reign of Tiberius a ship was sailing from Greece to Italy. When it touched the Echinades Islands in the Ionian Sea, a voice was heard summoning Thamus the Egyptian pilot, who was on board. Thrice was the call heard and when he responded, the voice commanded him, when he reached the Palodes to announce, "Pan the Great is dead." This legend reflects the temper of that age. There was little to be expected from the luxuriant mythologies of Greek religion, from the spectacular ceremonies of the Mysteries, from the florid faiths of Asia Minor, of the Orient, of the peoples along the Mediterranean seaboard and elsewhere in the Roman Empire. Even Judaism, which had become cosmopolitan, was too engrossed in the parochial interests of ritualism and sectarianism to offer a wholesome message of relief to a disillusioned age. The winter of withered life had settled everywhere, and

senility, so characteristic of the upper classes, held humanity as in a vise. Intellectualism made the Greeks brilliant, but their emotional temperament fitted them to shine only in prosperity. Imperialism was the outstanding achievement of the Romans, and their phlegmatic temperament gave them tenacity in times of storm. Græco-Roman paganism doubtless appeared at its best in the Emperor Julian, in the fourth century after Christ. Its character and outlook found expression in the swan-song of the Delphic Oracle, addressed to him in ominous words: "Tell the king, to earth has fallen the beautiful mansion; no longer has Phœbus a home, nor a prophetic laurel, nor a fount that speaks; gone dry is the speaking water."

Christianity struck a happy mean by combining the open mind of the intellectual Greek and the unflinching spirit of the imperialistic Roman. It neither disparaged the life of struggle as fit for slaves, nor depreciated the life of defeat as the disgrace of the conquered. It found in both struggle and defeat incentives towards strenuous endeavor, and used them as means for the exploits of disciplined victory. This is the open secret of the Radiant Christ, "who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne

of God."[5] It is the explanation of the heroic behavior of the early Christians, who were united with the will of Christ. In the words of an exiled Puritan, they "triumphed over cruelty with courage, over persecution with patience, and over death itself by dying." They knew fellowship with "The Joyous Comrade," from whom they caught the love of love, and they proved themselves worthy of this Friend of all men by their genial and jovial manner of living. They readily took up the Cross, which meant pulling up the stakes that kept them from advancing, and they followed Christ in whole-hearted obedience. The earthquake which shook the prison at Philippi was symbolical of the moral and spiritual earthquake which made the Empire tremble and totter, from the metropolis to its most distant outpost on the frontier. The preaching of the Good News of salvation by men and women, who were saved and sanctified, dispelled the mists of depression and let the sun of joy shine through the clouds.

Pain is a teacher of tantalizing qualities, and few learn her lessons aright. Joy is the most stimulating and profitable teacher. She leads us into the treasure house of goodness, which gives gladness, and there shines within us the light to

[5] Heb. 12:2.

guide us in the way of peace. Joy is the true unifier. The joyless are the isolated and self-centered individuals, who are incapable of sinking their differences for the larger good. The insane are peculiarly prone to magnify themselves. The French very significantly call them *les aliénés*, for they have lost the power of joining with others in the compacts which make life useful and happy. The expulsive power of the new affection drove out the enervating distempers and welcomed the buoyancies of confidence and cheerfulness. This experience of the early Christians was alluringly attractive, and others caught the contagion of its freshness and fulness. It was an easy matter with such credentials for them to win converts.

Their rapturous doxologies were at once confessions of faith and testimonies from experience. They exalted the inexhaustible God, saying, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out! For of him, and through him, and unto him are all things. To whom be glory forever. Amen." They magnified the All Sufficient God with the ascription: "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in

us, unto him be the glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever and ever. Amen." They rejoiced in the perfecting God and declared: "Now unto him that is able to guard you from stumbling, and to set you before the presence of his glory without blemish in exceeding joy, to the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and power, before all time, and now, and for evermore. Amen." They celebrated the redeeming One with the outburst: "Unto him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by his blood; and he made us to be a kingdom, to be priests unto his God and Father; to him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever, Amen." And again, "Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen."[6] How fragrant are these sentences of exultant thanksgiving, which welled up out of hearts of grateful joy! It is the more remarkable when it is remembered that they felt in this way, even when they were in the valley of shadows, in the grip of staggering storms, in the upheavals of privation and persecution, of disaster and desolation. They overstepped barriers, they overcame boundaries, they outlived

[6] Rom. 11:33; Eph. 3:20 f.; Jude 24 f.; Rev. 1:5, 7:12.

burdens, because they knew the reality of God in Christ, their glad Redeemer, their cheerful Helper, their encouraging Guide.

Such jubilation has always been impressively characteristic of Christianity. It was the new-born, conquering joy that brought relief of soul and resilience of spirit to the believers. They were thus able to sing even in the dark, as did St. Paul and Silas, who about midnight were praying and singing to God in the Philippian prison; as did St. John during his exile on the island of Patmos; as did John Bunyan in Bedford Gaol; as did Madame Guyon in the Bastille; as did John Nelson in the filthy dungeon in Bradford. Truly, they controlled the circumstances of their enforced limitations. Their souls were emancipated from earthly thraldoms by the grace of God, and they became more than conquerors through Him Who loved them. "If I perish," wrote Luther to Melanchthon, "it will be no loss to the Gospel, for you far surpass me. Do not be troubled in spirit; but sing the Lord's song in the night as we are commanded, and I shall join in."

St. Francis of Assisi laid upon his followers, the Franciscans, the sacred obligation of spiritual gladness. He himself went through life as *Le Jongleur de Dieu,* the gay one of God, sitting

lightly to the struggles and difficulties that came upon him, and carrying with him an atmosphere of prayer and praise. With an austerity and gaiety, worthy of the paradox of Christianity, he "walked the world like the Pardon of God," and his flaming passion for Christ was the secret of his infectious gladness, as it was of his companions. These men of the thirteenth century were the prototype of the early Circuit Riders of American Methodism, who braved dangers and laughed at difficulties, as they joyously advanced over the Rockies and through the forests of the South and West and elsewhere, until they camped on the Pacific Coast. So were the Salvation Army soldiers, who with quenchless rejoicing have gone to all sorts of inhospitable places, with the relief of the Gospel for material and spiritual conditions. So were the Christian missionaries of every generation and of every denomination.

It is a significant fact that the world's creative builders have always been joyous souls. Their fund of joy was fed by hidden sources, and their sense and serenity gave them cheerfulness. Think of Lincoln, whose humanism and humor enabled him to see beneath the surface show of things. He was patient without sluggishness, persistent without obstinacy, determined without domineer-

ing, sympathetic without impulsiveness, impartial without harshness. Think of Canon Barnett of Toynbee Hall, London. The guiding principle of his life was expressed in his motto: "The best for the lowest." It was the radiating glow of grace which illuminated his personality and deepened his conviction that, "it is only the passion of patience which effectually reforms abuses." He lived between the two fires of misunderstanding by the poor and of misrepresentation by the rich. He sternly resisted the temptation to become worn out by provocation, for the joy of the Lord was his strength. Well did he merit the eulogy of M. Clemenceau, who said in 1884: "I have met but three really great men in England, and one was a little pale clergyman in Whitechapel."

One of the unwritten sayings of Jesus is: "Ask for the big things and the little things shall be added unto you." It is pettiness that makes us penurious. It is the self-complacency of short-sightedness that paralyzes hindsight and foresight. We are afraid to make large ventures, and so we travel in an increasingly diminishing circle, obsessed by doubts and fears, which mortgage the future to pay the small debts of the present. The liberal-minded are justified by the sequel, for they

go on the principle of William Carey, the virtual founder of modern missions: "Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God." This is the exuberance of soul which is at a discount today. The lack of it is seen in the absence of creative contributions in art, music, literature, philosophy, religion, which have always been inspired by the impulse of joy. We are long in criticism and short in creation.

Such a situation is not peculiar to our own day. Threatenings of irreligious and anti-religious assaults have always followed the follies and miseries of nations after bloody conflicts. But discerning souls were not alarmed. They sailed the stormy seas, and though they were battered, they made port. Such was the experience of Augustine who relates the ecstasy of spiritual joy which he shared with his mother Monica towards the end of her earthly journey. "Just now we reached out, and with one flash of insight touched that Eternal Wisdom which abideth over all; could this be continued on and all other far inferior modes of vision be withdrawn, and this one ravish and absorb and wrap up its beholder amid these inward joys, so that life might be for ever like that one moment of understanding for which we sighed? Is not this the meaning of 'Enter thou

into the joy of thy Lord'?"[7] This is the mystic vision and experience of the life that is hid with Christ in God, enjoyed by a multitude of souls in every period of history. Dante was known to the people of Verona as the man who had seen Hell, but he had also seen Heaven. The radiance of the vision of the Rose of Paradise and of the "Light intellectual full of Love" ravished his soul and quickened his powers of creative energy for the travail and toil of troubled years. Wordsworth passed through dismal days of disillusionment and loss of faith during the aftermath of the French Revolution. But, as he confessed in "The Prelude," he came out of the gloom of languor, dejection, dismay, a dedicated spirit, a creative soul,

> "To look with feelings of fraternal love
> Upon the unassuming things that hold
> A silent station in this beauteous world."

The ascetic ideal has seldom made for strength. It has rather induced the disease of *Accidia*, well described as "the sin of don't care." It produces a breakdown of interest in those worth-while undertakings that make for genuine manhood and womanhood. Those who are afflicted with this

[7] *The Confessions of St. Augustine*, Book IX, Chapter 10.

malady become sullen and morose, dull and insipid, spiritually slothful, morally helpless, socially anæmic. They live in the Slough of Despond, and its mud soils the garments of their character as well as the output of their conduct. Middle age is particularly exposed to this affliction of *Accidia*, sharply described by Dante as the central evil of the Seven Deadly Sins. Such a malaise is foreign to the spirit of Christianity. "It is the most encouraging, the most joyous, the least repressive and the least forbidding of all the religions of mankind. There is no religion which throws off the burden of life so completely, which escapes so swiftly from sad moods, which gives so large a scope for the high spirits of the soul, and welcomes to its bosom with so warm an embrace those things of beauty which are joys for ever." [8]

The impact of paganism is responsible for thus poisoning the Christian springs, which were not adequately guarded by the Church. It is also seen in Christian hymns of a sentimental otherworldliness, inexcusably postponing many of the benefits of the Gospel for the world beyond, which are intended for present enjoyment. It is evi-

[8] L. P. Jacks: *The Lost Radiance of the Christian Religion*, p. 5 (Doran).

denced in the wistful manner of those who talk about "the good old days," and who unwittingly acknowledge that the infinite resources of God are exhausted. The poet was neither true nor wise in saying that, "A sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things." If this is all, where is our faith in the living God, and what about our powers of self-renewal by the divine grace? If the past one-sidedly absorbs our thought, so that we are blind to the good and the evil of the present, the virtues of heroic service and sacrifice will of necessity become atrophied.

We need to recover what Principal Jacks calls "those radiant conceptions of God, of man, of the universe, which are the life and essence of Christianity." John Bunyan relates in *Grace Abounding*, how he was impressed when he heard some poor women, who sat in the sun, tell their experience. "Methought they spake as if joy did make them speak." This was the note of the Evangelical Revival, and it was John Wesley who declared that "sour godliness is the devil's religion." Dr. R. W. Dale testified that the Moody and Sankey Revival in Great Britain awoke the slumbering fires of fervor among the Christians, so that "there was a joyousness and an elasticity

of spirit, and a hopefulness, which completely transformed them." If "joy is the grace we say to God," it is the speech of an experience which thrills with delight. Joy is not merely an emotion, but an enduement; it is not a temper, but a temperament; it is not a mood, but a spirit. It is an asset that furnishes the needed capital with which to do business for God and man. Christianity cannot part company with joy and retain its vibrant testimony.

It is worth noting that Buddhism has no hymns of joy; that Mohammedanism is hesitant in its praises of the divine love; that Hinduism knows nothing of the blessedness of reconciliation with God; that Confucianism has no message of peace. Roman Catholicism has witnesses of exalted piety, but it is skeptical of the believer's assurance of pardon by the direct access of faith to God. Sacerdotalism is a new legalism which makes more of personal merit than of the divine mercy as the ground of our acceptance with God. Dr. Dale, in commenting upon the *Life* of Dr. E. B. Pusey, one of the leaders of Oxford Tractarianism, paid a high tribute to the nobleness and massiveness of his nature, and observed: "The absence of joy in his religious life was only the inevitable effect of

his conception of God's method of saving men; in parting with the Lutheran truth concerning justification he parted with the springs of gladness." [9] This is indeed the Pauline truth of union with the divine, which declares that a man is justified not by works but solely by faith. "Justification by faith," wrote F. H. Bradley, "means that having identified myself with the object, I feel myself in that identification to be already one with it, and to enjoy the bliss of being, all falsehood overcome, what I truly am." Well does this discerning thinker say in another place: "This doctrine, which Protestantism, to its eternal glory, has made its own and sealed with its blood, is the very center of Christianity; and where you have not this in one form or another, there Christianity is nothing but a name." [10]

Evangelical Protestantism, better than any other type of Christianity or of religion, approaches nearest to the New Testament experience of joy. The Evangelicalism of the nineteenth century was doubtless narrow in its general outlook. It failed to relate religion to art and literature, and it had no definite word concerning the social discords

[9] A. W. W. Dale: *The Life of R. W. Dale of Birmingham*, p. 666 (Hodder and Stoughton).

[10] F. H. Bradley: *Ethical Studies*, Second Edition, pp. 325, 328. (Oxford University Press).

of the age. Its conventional ideas and traditional interpretations of sin and worldliness came out of a morbid asceticism, which depreciated the world that now is in favor of the world to come. But these Evangelicals had a dominant passion, which led them to magnify the grace of God with an intensity of devotion, a sacrificial enthusiasm, and a flaming joyousness, which did credit to their faith. Can we retain their ardor and escape their narrowness? I believe it is practicable if we concentrate on the major issues. Many of the differences dividing the existing groups of Protestantism have to do largely with academic questions. The time has surely come for its churches to engage in a comprehensive evangelism. The heart hunger of men and women represents intense need. They are haunted by fears, depressed by harassing cares, suffering from discords and anxieties, exhausted to the point of mental and moral collapse, bewildered by misunderstandings of what is essential to Christian truth, stampeded by those who mistake assertion for authority.

Clarity of thought and charity of spirit are indispensable to solve the present problems. The New Reformation will not come by new theological dogmas, as though it were chiefly a matter of

intellectual freedom. Explanation always follows experience. The passage from physical to spiritual realities must first be taken by faith in the testimony of Christ. It is "by far the most convincing of all testimonies relating to the coördinating action of the spiritual forces. . . . Our Christian knowledge of the spiritual forces revealed by Christ is deeply rooted in the solid ground of human experience of nearly two thousand years; it is a house built upon the hard rock of experience, and not upon the shifting sands of arbitrary hypotheses." [11] This is the experience which enables us to understand that, "joy which was the small publicity of the pagan, is the gigantic secret of the Christian." We have been far too long on the defensive and have given too much attention to mere negations. One who has had the opportunity to listen to many preachers wrote about one of them: "I was impressed by the force and joy with which he preached. It is not often that one hears a sermon obviously spoken with gladness." Why this pallid cast of thought and humid air and sophisticated mannerism, as though the preacher apologized for his appearance? Christianity has a positive Gospel or it has nothing.

[11] Michael Pupin: *The New Reformation from Physical to Spiritual Realities*, p. 269 f (Scribner's).

This broken world must be rebuilt, and confidence must be restored to the depressed heart of humanity. It can be done only by the Gospel of the Christian redemption, which has a ringing message, first to the individual and then to society. Place it in any context; examine it with the most searching tests of modern thought. The Gospel is still found to offer the cordial of hope, the fulness of love, the reality of goodness, the exhilaration of joy, the strength of courage. They who accept its benefits are still able, as did the faithful of former times, to bear a persuasive testimony by word and deed. Here is the explanation of its puissant power:

"Christ! I am Christ's! and let the name suffice you,
Ay, for me too He greatly hath sufficed:
Lo, with no winning words I would entice you,
Paul has no honor and no friend but Christ.

"Yes, without cheer of sister or of daughter,
Yes, without stay of father or of son,
Lone on the land and homeless on the water
Pass I in patience till the work be done.

"Yet not in solitude if Christ anear me
Waketh him workers for the great employ,
Oh not in solitude, if souls that hear me
Catch from my joyaunce the surprise of joy." [12]

[12] F. W. H. Myers: *Saint Paul*, p. 1 f (Macmillan).

## For Further Reading

T. Guy Rogers (Editor): *The Inner Life.* Essays in Liberal Evangelicalism (George H. Doran Company).

Sydney G. Dimond: *The Psychology of the Methodist Revival* (Oxford University Press).

L. P. Jacks: *The Lost Radiance of the Christian Religion* (George H. Doran Company).

Rufus M. Jones: *Spiritual Energies in Daily Life* (The Macmillan Company).

J. Rendel Harris: *Aaron's Breastplate and Other Addresses* (Headley Brothers, London).

A. M. Rihbany: *Seven Days with God* (Houghton Mifflin Company).

Francis Aveling: *Directing Mental Energy* (George H. Doran Company).

W. S. Bruce: *The Psychology of Christian Life and Behaviour* (Charles Scribner's Sons).

## *Chapter IX: The Dynamic Experience*

THE spring comes with buoyant and bounding life. The air becomes resonant with song; the atmosphere is fragrant with the gifts of nature; a varied beauty of color and form adorns the earth. This fascinating splendor is in marked contrast to the gray gloom of wintry skies. Such was the experience in the spiritual world of the first century after the Day of Pentecost. The divine power of the Risen and Ascended Christ took possession of the Christian believers, and there was started a movement which has gathered power and influence during the centuries. It was the realized presence of God through the Holy Spirit which gave them an enriched Christ-consciousness. The prophetic consciousness of earlier times, which distinguished a few elect souls, was democratized, and it became in even a deeper sense the enduement of every member of the Christian company. To be sure, there were diversities of gifts, determined by temperament and capa-

city, but the division of labor was for the common good.[1]

The outstanding result of the Pentecostal event was the experience of fellowship, which brought a unity of spirit and a community of life hitherto unknown in religious circles. The wavering and hesitating disciples ceased to be on the defensive. They entered upon an aggressive campaign to magnify the name of Jesus Christ as Redeemer and Lord. Barriers and burdens, insults and invectives, tumults and threatenings, privations and persecutions, stimulated their courage to give uncompromising expression to the convictions of a living experience. It is futile to think of this contact with spiritual reality as a form of hallucination, hysteria or autosuggestion. There was nothing abnormal or erratic in their behavior. They showed unusual common sense in checking any outbursts of fanaticism, in preventing neurotic excitements, in discouraging sectarian nationalism. Their penetrating insight into spiritual and moral values united them in primary matters, with a wide margin for differences on questions of secondary consequence. The temper of love was the animating virtue that controlled them. Their experience of peace and joy gave them serenity

[1] I Cor. 12:1 ff.

and happiness, which found expression in the social qualities of goodness, generosity, considerateness, and honor. This overpowering demonstration of exuberant vitality made a profound impression on that age of languid spirits and lax morals.

The New Testament is the literary witness to this movement. It is all the more significant because these writings were informal letters and epistles, called forth by the immediate needs of the converts from Judaism and paganism. But they all bear testimony to the creative experience which had given illumination and inspiration to the Christians, to continue in the new way. With striking unanimity they acknowledged that their personality was being perfected by the divine indwelling. They were not like charioteers plowing in the sands, but like an army with banners marching to victory along the Roman roads of the empire. This witness of the Spirit made them co-workers with God and more than conquerors through Christ.

You might as well try to explain light by ignoring the sun, as explain this remarkable experience of the early Church by discounting their deliberate declaration concerning the tidal energies of the immanent God, operating to make them what they became. It was this central fact of the spiritual

presence which liberated them from external bondage to law and ritual, and gave them the freedom of fraternal fellowship with peoples of different conditions, traditions and nations. It began as a lower class movement and had but a slight connection with the upper class of culture and authority. But the *élan vital* of creative power gradually brought into this redeemed company peasants, plebeians, and princes, who made impressive confessions of Christian inwardness, by word and deed.

Professor Deissmann has given a new reading of the New Testament, in the light of recently discovered inscriptions and papyri. He maintains that the New Testament writings are in the vernacular language of the first century. The letters of St. Paul are non-literary and popular in style; but he has "a poet's mastery of language, he experiences with unabated force in the depth of his prophet-soul the subtlest, tenderest emotions known in the sphere of religion and morals, and he reveals his experience in the personal confessions contained in his letters."[2] This apostle and the other writers of the New Testament had little interest in metaphysical and theological questions. Their concern was with the experimental realities

[2] Adolf Deissmann: *Light from the Ancient East*, Revised edition, p. 247 (Doran).

of Christianity and with the salvation of souls. The non-theological and non-classical language current at the time admirably suited their purpose, to convey the message of the Gospel to the common people among whom they labored. But while this test of language throws a flood of light upon the social environment of early Christianity, there is a deeper reason for the elevation of the New Testament to its unrivaled position as the book of life for all mankind. That reason is the emergence from this Book of "the figure of the Redeemer accompanied by the multitude of the redeemed, blessing and consoling, exhorting and renewing, revealing himself anew to every generation of the weary and heavy-laden, and growing from century to century more great." [3]

This dynamic experience challenges our best thought. The distinctive glory of Christianity, from the beginning, has been its ability to strengthen men by their consciousness of the Divine Presence. It is a mystical experience which implies a deeper and fuller union with God than is possible by moral and intellectual harmony. Indeed, it is the indispensable condition of progress in every realm of life. Mysticism is one of the most misunderstood and misused of words. This

[3] Deissmann, p. 392.

is not surprising, for it refers to divers experiences, including ascetic extravagances, erotic practices, salacious sentimentalisms, ethical discrepancies, and the sublime spiritual realities of the life that is hid with Christ in God. The historical aberrations for which mysticism is blamed, and the serious fallacies associated with it, should not lead us to neglect its permanent benefits. A de-moralized mysticism is as damaging as a de-intellectualized mysticism. They are both due to "the perverse perspective of spiritual reality." The essence of mysticism is love, and love "presupposes two distinct and free personalities." The mystical union is not a form of pantheism which declares that God is all and all is God, nor does the truth of the divine indwelling suggest that God is "a gigantic hypnotist." It is an experience of fellowship with the Father, in the Son, through the Holy Spirit.

This immediate and definite awareness of the divine in the human, imparts a vitalizing insight through heightened life; an intensifying of vision through fusion of intellect, emotion, and will; and a deepening of conviction through the dynamic unifying of personality. "Mysticism recalls us from the institutional to the spiritual, from externality to inwardness, from ritual to communion,

from creed to life."[4] This is the essential message of the New Testament. We urgently need it in these days of spiritual mediocrity and ethical insipidity, which confuse the means with the ends, and regard credulous and curious inquiries as indications of intelligent concern for the deep sanctities of life.

There is no fixed doctrine of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. What is more to the point is the evidence on every page that the adventures of these Christians were explicitly attributed by them to the enlightening and emancipating presence of the Divine Spirit. Just as there were varieties of talents, inspired by the same Spirit of grace and truth, so the manifestations of the Spirit differed according to the receptivity of individuals. The operations were not standardized nor were the conceptions of the Spirit's influence held with mechanical consistency. St. Paul guarded against the error of uniformity, and pleaded for the versatility and opulence of unity, in a passage that must never be forgotten. "For to one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom; and to another the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit; to another faith in the same Spirit; and to another gifts of healings, in the one Spirit; and

[4] E. Herman: *The Meaning and Value of Mysticism*, p. 374 (Doran)

to another workings of miracles; and to another prophecy; and to another discernings of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; and to another the interpretation of tongues; but all these worketh the one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one severally, even as he will." [5]

Is it not possible to understand this description in a liberal way? Have we not lost much by thinking of the word "spiritual" in a limited religious sense, which excludes the activities in art, literature, music, science, philosophy? What do we make of the report that Bezalel was filled with the Spirit of God, "to devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass" for the ancient tabernacle? [6] Was he not thereby acknowledged by Moses as his partner in the ministry of religion? Are we not likewise justified in regarding all who contribute to a deeper appreciation of reality, as persons inspired by the Spirit of all life? May we not take a larger view and say that the Spirit of God is present in the processes of creative evolution, in the weird and bewildering struggles of primitive man, in the baffling and persistent efforts of civilized mankind, in the experiences of the individual soul of pardon and peace, in the divers and often checkmating practices of the

[5] I Cor. 12:8 ff. [6] Exodus 35:30 ff.

churches to further the Kingdom of God? Are we not warranted in considering the present unrest and upheavals as unconventional and even as hazardous manifestations of the Spirit of God, summoning us to realize the divine purpose of redemption in Jesus Christ?

The twin truths of the divine transcendence and of the divine immanence teach us, among other things, that the present realization of God is an earnest of further realizations, to which there can be no limit. This is surely what our Lord meant in the promise: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when he the Spirit of truth is come, he shall guide you into all truth."[7] The New Testament is witness to the fulfilment of this encouraging outlook.

The symbolism used in describing the Pentecostal outpouring is suggestive. Fire was recognized in the Old Testament as a symbol of the divine presence, to purify and to intensify; the wind was regarded as a symbol of the power of God; and the tongue as symbolical of speech. The Holy Spirit, moreover, is referred to as descending, coming from above and not from below, from God and not from man. On the strategic day, the

[7] John 16:12 f.

disciples were met with one accord and in the mood of expectancy. There then came upon them an influence which awoke within them an enthusiasm like that of fire, and an energy like that of wind, and which gave them freedom of utterance, as though their tongues had been touched by lambent flames. Translate this poetic description into the language of prose, and we learn that the outstanding fact of that notable day was that "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit." [8]

The significance of this experience was shown in their behavior, to which reference has already been made. Any quotations from the Acts cannot adequately express the fact of spiritual fulness, since the whole book is a continuous illustration of it. It was under the control of the Spirit that marvels were wrought, conversions secured, persecutions borne, missionary journeys undertaken, differences settled, plans for extension made and prosecuted, and the glory of the Redeemer Christ magnified throughout the Roman Empire.[9] They were constantly pressing forward, in the power of the immanent God, towards greater acquirements, conveyed by the transcendent God of plenitude and power.

It is not surprising that the writers of the New

[8] Acts 2:1 ff. [9] *Cf.* Acts 5:32; 15:28; 16:6 f.

Testament, who used the mobile language of colloquial speech, were not particular about exact definitions. They wrote from the side of experience and had no interest in the fine distinctions of metaphysics or of theology. Religion to them was a serious business, and its essence was the reality of the experience of Christ in the Spirit. It is no disparagement of theology or philosophy, to say that St. Paul primarily thought of Christianity as a Christocentric experience. His purpose was not to formulate a system of religious thought, but to furnish incentives to men and women to live worthy of Christ, the Lord of life. He was a Christ-intoxicated man, and it was this fact more than any other which made him so fecund an interpreter of the Gospel of Redemption. The same may be said, in smaller measure, of the other New Testament writers, with the exception of the author of St. John's Gospel, which is without doubt "the most exalted word about the Holy Spirit in the New Testament."

Some theologians have apparently forgotten the indispensable principle that *Pectus facit theologum*, and their conclusions have mystified rather than clarified the truth of the divine indwelling. Then again the ecstatic rhapsodies and bizarre phrases of popular exponents of holiness lead to

the inference that they associate the work of the Holy Spirit almost exclusively with the abnormal and unintelligible phenomena of frenzied utterances and hysterical actions, such as were sternly repudiated by St. Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians. Holiness, to be sure, is something more than virtue. It is an inner grace that controls those who are in communion with God, and which bears the fruit of "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control." [10] This is the conclusive apologetic of the New Testament, and it is far more convincing than the learned arguments of speculative theology.

In some places in the New Testament, it would seem that the glorified Christ and the Holy Spirit are not distinguished, as though life in the Spirit is the same as fellowship with the living Christ. "Know ye not," inquires St. Paul of the Corinthians, "that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" And again, "know ye not as to your own selves, that Jesus Christ is in you?" [11] In the letter to the Romans, he is even more explicit: "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. But if any man hath not the

[10] Gal. 5:22. [11] I Cor. 3:16; II Cor. 13:5.

Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you."[12] These two experiences of life in Christ and life in the Spirit are not parallel but identical. This is plainly stated in the second letter to the Corinthians: "The Lord is the Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."[13] On the other hand, there are passages which clearly differentiate between the two: "No man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit." "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all."[14] St. John's Gospel makes a similar distinction: "I will pray the Father," said Christ, "and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth"; but he adds by way of explanation: "I will not leave you desolate. I come unto you."[15] With these words might be compared the commission to the disciples, which concludes with the

[12] Rom. 8:9 ff.
[13] II Cor. 3:17.
[14] I Cor. 12:3; II Cor. 13:14.
[15] John 14:16–18.

pledged promise: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." [16] And the force of these words is not lessened but increased, if, as some scholars hold, they were not actually spoken by Jesus but reflected the mature experience of the Church.

How then shall we reconcile these differences? Is it necessary that we should do so? Is it not enough to know that the New Testament writers thought of the Holy Spirit as the self-communication of God in Christ? Do they not emphasize the essential unity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, by distinguishing between God the originator and giver, Christ the revealer and mediator, the Spirit the agent and distributor of the gifts of salvation and sanctification? Is this not what Christian experience declares as God over us, God for us, God in us? Are we not exposed to the fallacy of tritheism, based upon a defective psychology of personality, when we separate for the sake of dogma, what God hath joined together? Are we not entitled to reinterpret this New Testament experience of holiness and happiness, of liberty and love, in ways that are intelligible to us, as the leaders of Church councils and of Christian thought interpreted this virile truth according to

[16] Matt. 28:20.

their understanding? Is not spiritual affinity of greater consequence than intellectual conformity? Are we not guilty of reading into the New Testament ideas derived from the venerable creeds, instead of letting this Book speak for itself and declare to us the words of eternal life?

Instead of twisting its teachings to harmonize with our traditions, should we not reconsider these latter, in view of what we learn from the Book, in the light of its spacious revelations to us? Rudolf Otto was surely right when he wrote: "Religion is not in vassalage either to morality or teleology, *ethos* or *telos*, and does not draw its life from postulates; and its non-rational content has, no less than its rational, its own independent roots in the hidden depths of the spirit itself."[17] By non-rational he does not mean irrational, but those features of the Godhead which are beyond the grasp of mere reason. It is what St. Paul meant: "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged."[18]

The course is clearly outlined for us by one of the wisest teachers of our day. Principal Davison

[17] R. Otto: *The Idea of the Holy*, p. 140 (Oxford University Press).
[18] I Cor. 2:14.

writes: "If the best results of modern scholarship are to be rightly appreciated and used; if mistaken traditions of ecclesiastical dogmatism are to be relinquished, without our falling into the vague unbelief of extreme rationalism; if in this generation any restatement—not reconstruction—of time-honored Christian doctrine is to be undertaken; if in these things there is to be liberty without laxity, authority without bondage, it can only be secured when the church, and especially its intellectual leaders, are filled with the influence of the ever-living, all-illumining Spirit, who, amidst dangers, doubts, and difficulties innumerable will not suffer them to stray." [19]

Recall how the speculations and casuistries of mediæval scholasticism tended to suppress spiritual illumination, and how this experience was preserved by obscure Christians who were ostracized by the Church. The Renaissance rediscovered man, and it was the beginning of remarkable changes in the intellectual, social, and political life of Europe. But these advantages were genuinely secured only after the Reformation, which rediscovered God, and released spiritual energies that were imprisoned within the barricades of ecclesias-

[19] W. T. Davison: *The Indwelling Spirit*, p. 259 (Hodder and Stoughton).

tical legalism, scholastic dogmatism, and ceremonial ritualism. The emergence of freedom from bondage had some undesirable exhibitions of fanaticism and other forms of extremism. But these unavoidable miscarriages should not obscure the creative contributions through the divine grace, which injected into a decaying Church the vital energies of spiritual power. This continued to be done at various intervals in connection with the revivals of religion. They followed no stereotyped method, and the periods of awakening had their dismal reactions. But advance was made in the power of the Spirit.

One lesson from the past is that relays of enthusiasm are insufficient. The Church is to be maintained by the cumulative experience of spiritual realities, inspired by a Christocentric faith. Impotence and failure have always been evidenced when the preaching was humanitarian, and stressed human duties as the chief consideration. God was assumed or taken for granted, so that he was virtually ignored. Works of kindness and relief were diligently performed; social reforms were assiduously encouraged; campaigns for education were earnestly prosecuted. The Church virtually became a Charity Organization instead of being the dynamic force to renew the individual life and

thus bring the Kingdom of God, which is "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." [20]

Is this not the situation that largely confronts us to-day? Are the empty churches altogether due to the indifference and preoccupation of people? Is it true that "the hungry sheep look up and are not fed"? Do the preachers speak with the authority of spiritual conviction; or are their sermons the echoes of pious commonplaces, of newspaper sensationalisms or of literary gossip? Is the atmosphere of worship imparted by the Church service, so that it is easier for weary men and women to get a vision of God, and to hear the voice of Christ speaking peace, and to be retreated in the inner depths of the soul for better living? If the Church fails here, it fails all along the line. We may improve our organization and have beautiful church buildings and raise considerable money for charities. But these things are as spectacular as they are superficial, unless the four winds of heaven quicken them for spiritual effectiveness. Without this animating power, they are "faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null; dead perfection, no more."

Our supremest need is the plenitude of the Spirit. Egoistic impulses, restless activities, inces-

[20] Rom. 14:17.

sant changes, clearly show that we are straitened in our adorations, our admirations, and our affections. The religion of precept and ritual imposed externally must be replaced by the religion of passionate adventure and irrepressible zeal. This is the uprush of life from God which enhances our personality, enriches our fellowship, and stimulates us "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." It is a holy unction that purifies our vision, and gives us intellectual freedom, moral rectitude, and steadfastness of purpose, to do all the will of God. It is the indispensable qualification to exorcise the demons of selfishness, greed, lust, hatred, enmity, which tragically afflict our modern life everywhere. If the morale of the Church is to be reëstablished upon stable foundations, we must recover this lapsed experience. Only as the divine fire is rekindled upon the altars of our hearts shall we get rid of the causes of arrested development. This inner triumph is assured to all who seek it in prayer, confident that the Heavenly Father is ready to "give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him."[21] When this cardinal message of the entire New Testament is accepted, and its reality is experienced by us, then we shall find our true anchorage in the

[21] Luke 11:13.

living Christ. This will recreate the Church as the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, giving it freedom from the fetters of barren rationalism and arid traditionalism, and imparting the exuberant and exhilarating gladness so indispensable for a triumphant church. *Veni Creator Spiritus.*

"Spirit who makest all things new
Thou leadest onward: we pursue
The heavenly march sublime.
'Neath Thy renewing fire we glow,
And still from strength to strength we go,
From height to height we climb.

"In Thee we rise, in Thee we rest;
We stay at home, we go in quest,
Still Thou art our abode.
The rapture swells, the wonder grows,
As full on us new life still flows
From our unchanging God."

### For Further Reading

W. T. Davison: *The Indwelling Spirit* (Hodder and Stoughton).

B. H. Streeter (Editor): *The Spirit* (The Macmillan Company).

W. W. Bryden: *The Spirit of Jesus in St. Paul* (George H. Doran Company).

T. Rees: *The Holy Spirit in Thought and Experience* (Charles Scribner's Sons).

A. E. Garvie: *The Christian Doctrine of the Godhead* (George H. Doran Company).

Charles A. Anderson Scott: *The Fellowship of the Spirit* (George H. Doran Company).

William Adams Brown: *The Life of Prayer in a World of Science* (Charles Scribner's Sons).

Kenneth Edward: *Religious Experience. Its Nature and Truth* (Charles Scribner's Sons).

Henry Balmforth: *Is Christian Experience an Illusion?* (George H. Doran Company).

Thomas Wilson: *St. Paul and Paganism* (Charles Scribner's Sons).

# *Chapter X: The Community of Fellowship*

THE crucial question before us is whether Christianity or the new paganism will control and direct the life and destiny of men and nations. In comparison with this question, the rival claims of the churches are a secondary issue. They can be properly considered only as we have a sense of proportion, which gives a clear vision of the course of events from the beginning. Instead of the hothouse atmosphere of sentimentalism, we need the bracing air of historical understanding. "If the past has been an obstacle and a burden," wrote Lord Acton, "knowledge of the past is the safest and the surest emancipation." In much the same sense, Dr. G. G. Coulton said, "when we are repelled by the past it is because we have not yet understood it." There has been much vacuous talk about our unhappy divisions, disregarding the sanctity of tradition and setting at nought the impressive testimony of the past. It is impossible to build anew on freshly laid foundations, as though wisdom began with us. The

principle of development reckons with what has gone before, and it encourages such advances as promise tentative or more complete solutions of our problems.

The origins of Christianity are historical and not mythical. It began with a Person and not a program, with an experience and not a dogma. It is unique among the religions of the world, since its vitality depends on direct contact with the living Christ. The evolution of Christianity has taken place in respect of the fuller appreciation of the Creative Personality of our Lord and of his cumulative influence upon his followers and the world. The revolutions in Christianity have resulted from attempts to construe the puissant grace of Jesus Christ in terms of reason and of a verifiable religious experience. The processes of adjustment have shaken the things which decay and established those vitalities which time and tide have shown to be superbly excellent. Far from having exhausted its energies, Christianity faces the future with vision undimmed, with spirit undismayed, with enthusiasm undivided. It is the religion of humanity as to its universal offer of pardon and peace to all, who are disillusioned and distracted by the pain and peril of our ambiguous days.

Historical Christianity is assuredly a complex of polity, liturgy, doctrine, and practice. It has aimed to cover all the interests of human life, but its methods of procedure have not always been satisfactory or effective. As the religion of authority, buttressed by ecclesiastical pronouncements, it has often yielded to policies of expediency, enforced by worldly compromises. The periods when Christianity had imperial patronage were invariably marked by acrimony and bitterness, by intolerance and bigotry, on the part of its leaders. Earthbound ecclesiastics contended for claims and sanctioned practices that were subversive of the true ideals of New Testament Christianity. On the other hand, as the religion of the Spirit, sustained by the fervent testimonies of individual Christians, it has suffered from the fanatic extravagances of extremists, who have insisted that error is found in every other way except their own. There is not much of a choice between the dragooned uniformity of the domineering ecclesiastic and the marooned uniformity of the obstinate sectarian. The benefit of the doubt would, however, go to the former, with an unbroken continuity of service, and not to the latter, whose exclusiveness snaps the bond which holds society in healthy relationships.

An impartial survey of the broad spaces of Christian history reveals the fact that by the side of the distorted Christianity of institutionalists and of individualists, there were gracious exhibitions of Christian sanctity and spirituality. These prove that the regnant consciousness of Christ and of fellowship in him was enjoyed by countless thousands in conspicuous and in obscure places. Indeed, the tares have appeared with the wheat in every epoch. Heated passions, partisan strife, sinister proposals, evasive actions, might have been avoided had the atmosphere been clarified by the central calm of charity. Such a possibility is by no means illusive, least of all in the present disposition of an increasing number of Christians, "to be at once considerate towards faith and candid towards truth."

The influence of Christianity during the centuries is one of the thrilling facts of history. Its impact upon men and nations has extended into every realm of life, to broaden intellectual conceptions, to deepen spiritual experiences, and to strengthen social obligations. It is at once a religion and a theology, an ethic and an æsthetic, an inspiration and an institution, an adventure and an achievement. Its failures have been occasioned by spiritual misdirections, ethical misapplications,

political misalliances, social misdemeanors. And yet Christianity has never been stagnant or stationary. It has continued to launch out into the deep, sailing the sea under the leadership of the One Captain, making new discoveries, obtaining larger possessions, accomplishing greater conquests.

The contacts with other religions, and the comparative study of them, have conclusively demonstrated the unsurpassed distinction of Jesus Christ. His credentials are open to the most searching investigation. But the confident certainty of his supremacy is compatible with a transitional theology, which confesses that there are some issues not yet settled. Those who speak with the arrogance of dogmatism, and who would excommunicate all who do not see eye to eye with them on major and on minor issues, are rendering a disservice to Christianity, however passionate may be their sincerity. They fail to realize that the mere repetition of words and phrases may have a hypnotic effect without any relation to reality. "A play upon words in which one sense is taken by the speaker and another sense intended by him for the hearer" has been prolific of endless equivocations.[1]

[1] *Cf.* C. K. Ogden and I. A. Richards: *The Meaning of Meaning*, p. 17 (Harcourt, Brace & Company).

A study of the progress of Christianity in its large historical contexts increases our appreciation of its pregnant vitality. We are at once impressed by the fact that Christianity cannot be understood apart from the Church. In spite of wise and unjust criticisms, the Church has survived the centuries and is still doing business for God and man. It has repeatedly adapted itself to changing conditions, and, despite corruptions and lapses, it has reconstructed civilization in every period of history. In the present day, it is finding new ways to express the eternal Truth of the Christian redemption. The Church is still the luminous center of spiritual idealism and stimulus, of moral direction and influence, of philanthropic relief and social reform. "Be not betrayed," wrote Emerson, "into undervaluing the churches which annoy you by their bigoted claims. I agree with them more than I disagree. I agree with their heart and motive; my discontent is with their limitations and surface and language." Viscount Morley was equally explicit in declaring against the rasping tone of some critics. "We get very wearied of the persistent identification of the Church throughout the dark ages with fraud and imposture and sinister self-seeking, when we have once learnt, what is undoubtedly the most important

principle in the study of those times, that it was the churchmen who kept the flickering light of civilization alive amid the raging storms of uncontrolled passion and violence." [2]

The testimony of history is a healthy reminder that the Church has constantly engaged in struggle against opposing forces. We learn what were the creative impulses and the disruptive interruptions, which influenced men and nations in the pursuit of policies that furthered or retarded the progress of mankind. For instance, many present-day movements have a remote ancestry. A knowledge of these rational and erratic activities and their effects upon previous ages will help us to meet these ancient friends or foes in their modern dress. Many suffer from disillusion and cynicism because they do not know the past and are, therefore, exposed to the vagaries of the present. It is only partially true that history repeats itself. Action and reaction have not been according to "cyclical recurrences," but through crisis, catastrophe, and reconstruction. This is seen in the life of the Church. It has withstood the fierce fires of calumny and hostility because of ability to recuperate itself. This was done through providential revivals of religion by leaders, filled with the

[2] John Morley: *Votaire*, p. 323 f (Macmillan).

Spirit of holiness; through enlightened interpretations of Christian Truth by scholars, imbued with the Spirit of wisdom; through convincing lives of the rank and file, charged with the Spirit of love. Differences of utterance and of influence were occasioned by peculiarities of temperament, tradition, and civilization; but there was an underlying oneness in Christ, which gave expression to the believers' loyalty to him, even when the contradictions could hardly be reconciled.

Such a paradox might be appreciated when it is remembered that the subject has been approached in different ways. The *ecclesiastical* study of the Church has to do with its growth as an institution, in the course of which its authority was asserted by the deliverances of councils, that often did violence to the principle of freedom, by instigating persecutions and inquisitions and by making entangling alliances with the State. The *liturgical* study is concerned with the various rites and symbols of worship, and with the forms and accessories used in the sanctuary and in private devotion. The *doctrinal* study takes note of the development of Christian thought in the crucible of discussion and controversy, and which found expression in the creeds and in the writings of great teachers. The *political* study, which is also

*ethical* and *sociological*, relates to the activities of the Church in its contacts with the State and with economic and social movements, whereby it succeeded and failed in discharging its supreme function as the bearer of the divine revelation of God in Christ, and in uttering its message with prophetic courage concerning the imperative mandates of life. The *spiritual* study has reference to the expansive growth of Christian experience, as evidenced in the devout lives of saints and seers, at home and on the mission field, and the influence exerted by them. These studies overlap and intersect at many points; but they are all necessary for a thorough understanding of the many-sided program of the Church.

The New Testament Church was a fraternal fellowship of loyal souls, who made the confession of experience, that Jesus Christ is Redeemer and Lord. The flexibility of organization and the variety of methods gave them freedom. It was not freedom from authority but a surrender to the highest authority of Christ. They were protected from subjective hallucinations by the community of fellowship, which transcended racial and national barriers, and made them all privileged partakers of the one salvation. Each community of believers was an independent unit on a basis

of equal rights. There was no subordination to any other community by reason of seniority as to time or numerical membership. They rather acknowledged an interdependence in a spirit of mutual respect for coöperative service. They were united, not by similarities of polity but by agreements of faith in the prevenient and abundant grace of God. Differences of procedure, determined by necessities in the several fields of labor, did not affect the *bene esse* of the Church, nor did they limit the opulence of the divine resources in Christ.

Belief and loyalty were endorsed by two rites. Baptism was the seal of faith in Christ and the public acknowledgment of fidelity to him. The Eucharist was the celebration of grateful and obedient union with Christ and with every believer. Here more particularly was emphasized the divine element in magnifying the Lord of life, and the human element in intensifying the unity of the Brotherhood. This fellowship was the spontaneous outcome of the memorable and monumental experience of the Holy Spirit. The character of the membership was picturesquely made known by the names used among them. They were *disciples*, guided by the Master's Rule of life; *brethren*, acknowledging their origin and kinship;

*friends*, practising cordial relationships; *followers*, announcing their allegiance; *believers*, confessing their faith in the Redeemer; *witnesses*, accepting the obligation to testify to what they actually knew; *saints*, pursuing the ideal of holiness and perfection. The name *Christian*, given them by the world, was a testimony to their confidence in Christ and the secret of their fidelity to him.

This community of the faithful was called "the Church of God," "the body of Christ," "the household of the faith," "a temple of God," "the Israel of God," "a royal priesthood."[3] In the main they followed the program outlined in what has felicitously been called "the Jerusalem Quadrilateral": "the apostles' teaching and fellowship, the breaking of bread and the prayers."[4] The Church was not a product of the sagacity and foresight of men. It was a divine creation in the distinctive sense that all who belonged to it were renewed by the Spirit of God and were constantly aware of the presence of Christ. The primal impulse which originated the Church came from Christ. He was its foundation. Whatever form was given to the superstructure was due to the independent initiative and sanctified prudence of

[3] I Cor. 1:2; Eph. 4:12; Gal. 6:10; I Cor. 3:16; Gal. 6:16; I Peter 2:9.

[4] Acts 2:42.

those who were in vital communion with him through the Indwelling Spirit. The apostles were the qualified interpreters of the mind of Christ on questions of Christlike character and conduct. They could hardly be regarded as the custodians and regulators of any ecclesiastical polity, requiring mechanical uniformity. The New Testament is our conclusive witness that every Christian assembly was a constituent part of the whole Church, which is "the pillar and bulwark of the Truth." [5] In a profound sense, the New Testament Church was the Society of Reconciliation. It maintained a genuine "high church" idea, not in respect of rubrics and ministerial orders, but with regard to spiritual gifts and ethical fidelities, which showed a keen feeling for the inner fitness of things.

The first-century Church was by no means perfect. The pettiness of strife and the insistence upon nationalistic prerogatives precipitated difficulties. But the far-sighted leadership of men like St. James, St. Peter, and especially St. Paul, helped to turn the drift away from sectarianism, and to concentrate attention on the far more wholesome ideal of spiritual catholicity. This trouble has repeatedly disturbed the Church. Wise coun-

[5] I Tim. 3:15.

sels have, however, as often prevailed over the divisive forces of pride, error, and force, wherever Christians have adopted St. Augustine's test: *Ubi ecclesia, ibi et Spiritus Dei; et ubi Spiritus Dei, illic ecclesia et omnis gratia.* This is the genuine sacramental gift of Christianity, which exceeds every other qualification that may be endorsed by sacerdotal claims, episcopal demands and ecclesiastical appeals.

A distinction has been made in every age between the church institutional and the church spiritual, as though there could be no affinity between the two. Is it not possible for the ecclesiastic to have the virtues of the mystic? Does personal religion suffer when it finds organized expression? Is the compulsion of force exercised only by the institution and never by the individual? Is persuasion more effective when made by one than by many in unity? Is the machinery of organization to be wholly discarded and the preference given to the good impulses of the hour? Can Christianity be a soul without a body, an organism without an organization? Is the Church solely an invisible body, composed of those who are affiliated with Christ but who acknowledge no obligations to any corporate group of Chris-

tians? Is the Church the shell of Christianity, to be broken or discarded when it has outlived its usefulness? The counsel of despair, characteristic of shrieking revolutionaries, is that we should destroy the Church and begin *de novo*. The counsel of faith urges us to have a vision of the whole, and to distinguish between the primary and secondary requirements in a spirit of charity that "taketh not account of evil, but believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."[6]

The Church is not a mausoleum in memory of a dead Christ, nor is it a museum of antiquated beliefs and practices. It is a missionary agency to propagate a vital faith in a living Christ. Its chief function is to help us to get a grip on God, and there is no limit to the range of its influence. Its work has been done through a variety of methods, and no church could claim a monopoly of Truth and Faith. Witnesses to Christ are found in all branches of the Church. The so-called sectarians have often given proof of their intense loyalty to Christ by reason of their very nonconformities, in ways that have rivaled and even outdistanced the devotion and sacrifice of conformists. These testimonies cannot be discounted without ruthlessly discarding the contributions of the

[6] I Cor. 13:5 ff.

noble army of martyrs and confessors found in all lands and ages. The disruptions of the Church have really been blessings in disguise. They were protests against inadequate conceptions of the Church, against the arrogant intolerance of ecclesiastics, against the attempts of doctrinairies to substitute propositions about Christ for the central Person of Christ himself, against the propagation of Christian truth by anti-Christian means.[7]

There are some who maintain that the Kingdom of God is the only idea worth cherishing. But they forget that the *Regnum Dei* is to be realized by the *Ecclesia Christi*, which is its most effective agency. The Kingdom of God contemplates the final consummation when God shall be all and in all. This sublime supremacy is to be accomplished by loyal souls, not as isolated units but as coöperative groups. Men like Hildebrand confused the Kingdom of God with the Church. They thus substituted "the Jewish ideal of righteousness by means of government, for the Christian ideal of government by means of righteousness." [8] It is not surprising that under these circumstances many misadventures were undertaken, inspired by zeal without knowledge, and many mishaps rent

[7] *Cf.* A. C. Headlam: *The Doctrine of the Church and Christian Reunion*, p. 205 (Longmans, Green).

[8] A. Robertson: *Regnum Dei*, p. 368 (Macmillan).

the Church, which jeopardized and nullified its supreme mission for pure and undefiled religion.

We need a synthetic spirit which reckons with all that is valid in the past, in view of the processes of the evolutionary growth of the idea and the influence of the Church. Between the second and the fourth century, when heresies threatened to undermine the Church, "to be a Catholic Christian meant that neither the church of Jerusalem nor the church of Rome nor any local church bore exclusive witness to the truth: that was to be found in the consent of the churches, and in their joint fidelity as guardians of the common tradition." [9] Had this canon been observed in the later centuries, many of the disastrous passages in the history of the Church need not have been taken.

One of our pressing needs is the virtue of comprehensiveness, which appreciates versatile initiations, so as to counteract the static idea of a monotonous sameness, which vainly endeavors to reproduce the past. This assuredly is what is meant by Catholicism, which has spiritual and intellectual connotations and refers to godliness rather than to geography. The true Catholic is not a schismatic with partisan interests, nor is he an

[9] C. H. Turner on "Apostolic Succession" in *Essays on the Early History of the Church and the Ministry*. Edited by H. B. Swete, p. 117 (Macmillan).

eclectic who selects and rejects or includes and excludes according to narrow prejudices. He shows discerning hospitality to all who love and serve Jesus Christ in sincerity. A genuine Catholicity, moreover, constrains us to give a more generous interpretation to the words, *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*, so as to embrace all seekers after truth, who have faith and charity, and who belong to the soul of the Church, *pertinent ad animam Ecclesiæ*.

This discerning relationship of parts to the whole might further be considered with reference to the many functions of the Church. The *Ecclesia Docens* is the teaching body composed of the apostles, bishops, priests, preachers, teachers, and pastors, whose authority is not primarily based upon ecclesiastical permits, but upon hearty accord with the full truth of Christ. The *Ecclesia Discens* is the company of all devout learners, both clergy and laity, who prove their allegiance as obedient followers of our blessed Redeemer and Lord. The *Ecclesia Militans* includes all who bear the Cross of Christ in their continuous struggle against the powers of evil in themselves and in society, and who are moved by the passion to establish the control of Christ over every sphere of life. The *Ecclesia Triumphans* embraces all who have fought in the good fight and who were

promoted into the fellowship of the redeemed in the City of God above. There is nothing exclusive in this discrimination, for one may belong to all of these divisions and exhibit the enjoyment of the manifold grace of God.

We follow a will-o'-the-wisp, if we expect that one who finds membership here should first submit to the requirements of denominationalism. This is an optional matter determined by temperament and association. The fundamental test of Church membership is far more exacting. It is the experience of personal union with Christ, confirmed by living "soberly, righteously, and godly."[10] This more than anything else will break down the rigidity of ecclesiastical imperialisms, the anarchy of fissiparous individualisms, the hostility of dogmatic obscurantisms. It will, furthermore, make for the true democracy of Christianity and of the Church, by recognizing the superiority of character regardless of heredity and environment.

We are witnessing to-day a reaction from the excessive and one-sided subjectivity of religious experience towards the balanced objectivity of the divine Revelation. There is also a rebellious dissatisfaction with the partial categories of theological shibboleths and sectarian emphases. The

[10] Titus 2:11.

claims made for authority without freedom and for freedom without authority are alike chimerical.[11] The attitude of Mediæval Catholicism and of later Puritanism reckoned only with a segment of the circle. They had both departed from the center, under the influence of ascetic monasticism and rigid scholasticism. They mistook the part for the whole and focused their activities within restricted areas, and disregarded or denounced many values accruing from Goodness, Truth, and Beauty, because forsooth they were not specifically labeled religious.

It is surely practicable to arrive at a synthesis of Evangelical Catholicism, which embraces all the virtues found in the several types of historical Christianity, which equally derive from the complete Christ of our redemption. "Duties of religion," wrote Hooker, "performed by whole societies of men ought to have in them a sensible excellency corresponding to the majesty of him whom we worship." In terms of this generous principle, the æsthetic preferences for ritual or for spontaneity of worship need not be exclusive, but should be given their desired and needed places in an atmosphere of fervent devotion. The valid-

[11] *Cf.* A. E. J. Rawlinson: *Authority and Freedom*, pp. 53, 105 (Longmans, Green).

ity of the sacraments should be considered in the light of the Church's development, and of the ability of the sacraments to exhibit the opulence of the divine goodness and to meet the spiritual needs of the present and of coming days.

This most desirable goal of liberal Christian fellowship will be reached when the Church becomes more distinctively known as the *Ecclesia Orans*, engaged in the supreme business of worship. Adjustments and adaptations will then be made, not by compromises in the twilight zone of latitudinarianism, which shows the subtleties of evasiveness and the doubtful amiabilities of borderland gestures. They will be made in the clear light of Ecumenical Christianity, which magnifies love for Christ and loyalty to his redemptive purpose. When we unite in the *Te Deum Laudamus*, with the passion of grateful praise, we visualize the glory of the Eternal and realize the shortcomings of "sub-Christian religious tastes and instincts." When we elevate the Cross, which is the triumphant symbol of our Holy Faith, we cut the root of the Upas tree, which has poisoned the noblest impulses of the Christian Church in every generation. The temper produced by praise and prayer cannot fail to give us the correct perspective, so that we can better understand the opu-

lence of our religious legacy and how to use and to enrich it for present needs.[12]

Some of the functions discharged by the Church in previous ages have been taken over by other organizations. Its work is thus restricted and, therefore, all the more indispensable. It is no less arduous and no less embracing than anything attempted before. Principal Barker suggests the directions in which all the churches should fulfil their mission. "They have to find, by the toil of their thinkers, a vision of eternal and immutable truth which they can commend, without reserve or qualification, to the growing demands of a more critical age and a more awakened intelligence. They have to escape from the shadow of unreality which lies heavy upon religious confessions, in days in which ancient formularies have not yet been revised to meet the growth of historical knowledge and scientific discovery. They have to consider the bearing of Christian principles on social problems and policy." He points out that the Mediæval Church and Puritanism failed to enforce their formulations. Whether modern attempts will succeed any better remains to be seen. But attempts must continue to be made until the

[12] *Cf.* Friedrich Heiler: *The Spirit of Worship* (Doran); W. L. Sperry: *Realty in Worship* (Macmillan); Von Ogden Vogt: *Modern Worship* (Yale University Press).

results are satisfactory. "Christianity is not a religion of dualism; and it would be a form of dualism to believe that there is one rule in the world of religious life, and another in the world of economics or of international relations. Whatever the prospects—success or failure, praise or blame—a Christian Church is bound by its nature to seek 'to reduce to the One' the tangled skein of human life." [13]

The Church has had a stormy passage through the centuries. But its setbacks often revealed unexpected resources, and defeat was turned to victory. Indeed, the Church has always been at the crossroads. And yet every crisis has been overcome by enlightened leadership, which courageously welcomed the new spirit astir in the world and employed it for the enrichment of a worshiping and working Church. The Reformation ended an intolerable order and made possible the acquisition of spiritual freedom. The Evangelical Revival recalled the Church in England to the vital experiences of personal religion, as was done by Pietism on the Continent of Europe. The Oxford Movement, inspired by Romanticism, enriched public and private worship and stimulated

[13] Ernest Barker: *National Character and the Factors in Its Formation*, p. 212 f (Harper's).

all the churches in social religion. These quickenings had undesirable results, but that was inevitable in times of stir and emergency, when emotionalism prejudiced calm judgment and when excitement was mistaken for enlightenment. But in the sequel the blunders of well-meaning extremists have been rectified and the sum total of benefits conserved. Dismal considerations should not monopolize our thought of the Church, when we remember that it has always been the society of saints, seers, scholars, and servants of humanity. The Church has, indeed, been an indestructible reality. It has gone through the gates and prepared the way of the peoples, and led them along the highway of holiness, health, and happiness.[14]

The present state of the world offers the Church an unrivaled opportunity to proclaim the gospel of Redemption, with a wealth of resourcefulness, unparalleled in the history of the race. The quickening of a vibrant Church consciousness is an auspicious sign that Protestantism is able to justify its claim as a legitimate part of the Church of Christ. The apologetic attitude of negativism and the competitive spirit of separatism are yielding to the positive temper of Evangelical Catholicity. In an age that is clamoring for reconstruction

[14] *Cf.* Isa. 62:10.

and has grown suspicious of traditional panaceas, which are effete and ineffectual, we need to give Jesus Christ the supreme right of way, and let his Spirit control all the activities of the Church. A strong evangelistic movement, which reckons with the whole gamut of human life, will carry us beyond our present complacencies, discordances, and inabilities. Thus will the task of the Church be discharged for the redemption and the remaking of individuals and of nations.

"All, all as one we praise Thee,
Great Giver of salvation!
Whose equal grace nor time, nor place,
Nor language knows, nor nation.
We praise and wait imploring
Thy hour of final favor;
Call in Thine own, reveal Thy throne,
And o'er us reign for ever."

### For Further Reading

Arthur C. Headlam: *The Doctrine of the Church and Christian Reunion* (Longmans, Green and Co.).

S. Parkes Cadman: *Christianity and the State* (The Macmillan Company).

Oscar L. Joseph: *The Historical Development of Christianity* (Charles Scribner's Sons).

Francis J. Peabody: *The Church of the Spirit* (The Macmillan Company).

## COMMUNITY OF FELLOWSHIP

William Adams Brown: *Imperialistic Religion and the Religion of Democracy* (Charles Scribner's Sons).

P. Carnegie Simpson: *Church Principles* (George H. Doran Company).

Charles Guignebert: *Christianity, Past and Present* (The Macmillan Company).

Ernest Barker: *National Character and the Factors in Its Formation* (Harper & Brothers).

Oliver Chase Quick: *The Christian Sacraments* (Harper & Brothers).

H. R. L. Sheppard: *The Impatience of a Parson* (Doubleday, Doran & Company).

## *Chapter XI: The Manifold Book*

THE scholar has always been an indispensable influence for religious progress. He is the pioneer into unknown regions, the discoverer of unfamiliar ideas, the interpreter of unacceptable thought, the reconciler between the old and the new in the interest of the larger fulness of Truth. He is a dedicated spirit who undertakes his patient investigations and continues in heroic toil, with no thought of pecuniary rewards or social distinctions. He is not a time-server seeking the hostages of fortune or the plaudits of the multitude. He is more often maligned and persecuted, as an unwelcome intruder, by self-complacent doctrinaires who have no use for more light. But with characteristic idealism, he discharges his destined task for the welfare of humanity and the glory of God. Our concern here is with one branch of scholars. No extended review is possible within the limits of a single chapter. A few illustrations will, however, show our indebtedness to these men

of learning and religion for a better knowledge of the Bible.

This sacred literature came out of the intense struggles of prophets and priests, of saints and students, of apostles and disciples. It was preserved and reproduced on papyrus, parchment, vellum, and leather by conscientious scribes. The earliest Hebrew manuscripts used only consonants. Vowel points were introduced later, to conserve the accuracy of the text and to help correct pronunciation. This was the work of the Masoretes, or grammarians, of the first century, A. D. The paucity of Hebrew manuscripts and the fact that the earliest is dated 916 A. D. are explained by the Talmudic demand that all worn-out rolls should be destroyed, to prevent the sacred books from coming into the possession of unbelievers. The Masoretic text can, however, be verified with the help of the Samaritan Pentateuch, an early Hebrew version which preserves intact the traditions of the Samaritans. The oldest available manuscript is the valued Codex at Shechem, dated 1218 A. D. The Septuagint, or Greek translation, produced in Alexandria between 300 and 150 B. C., is an indirect witness to the Hebrew text. It is of additional value because it was practically the Old Testament of the Christian Church. The Peshitta,

or Syriac translation, made about the second century A. D. for the use of Jewish converts to Christianity, is a secondary witness. The Talmud is a Jewish commentary, discursive and polemical, written during the third and fifth centuries A. D., although the earliest complete manuscript available is dated 1369 A. D. The Itala, or Old Latin version, was made in the second century of the Christian era. It was superseded by the Latin Vulgate of St. Jerome, prepared between 392 and 405. The Hexapla of Origen, in the third century, contains the Hebrew text, the Septuagint, and five other versions, arranged in parallel columns. The Complutensian Polyglot, edited by Cardinal Ximenes, was the first printed edition of the New Testament. It was published in 1522, after his death, and contains the Hebrew text, the Septuagint, and the Vulgate. These treasures were made accessible to the readers of the English Bible and of other translations with the aid of the severe labors of textual criticism dealing with questions of text and language, and of historical criticism aiming to discover the authorship and dates of these writings.

The New Testament text has escaped many of the misadventures and mishaps associated with the text of the older Scriptures. The earliest New

Testament manuscript belongs to the fourth century, while the earliest Old Testament manuscript comes from the tenth century, A. D. *The Codex Vaticanus,* in the Vatican Library at Rome, was written in Egypt in the fourth century; it contains almost the entire Bible, and scholars have had access to it since 1867. The *Codex Sinaiticus,* in the Imperial Library at Leningrad, also belongs to the fourth century. Separate parts were discovered by Dr. Tischendorf in St. Catharine's monastery on Mt. Sinai in 1844 and 1859. It contains portions of the Old Testament, all of the New Testament, the Epistle of Barnabas and the Shepherd of Hermas. The *Codex Alexandrinus,* in the British Museum, was written in the fourth century, probably in the East near Constantinople. It contains almost all of the Old Testament in Greek, the New Testament, the Psalms of Solomon and the two epistles of Clement of Rome. The *Codex Ephraemi,* in the National Library at Paris, is a palimpsest. The original writing, which was almost erased but later recovered, is a mixed text of the New Testament from the fifth century. The *Codex Bezæ,* in the Library of Cambridge University, belongs to the fifth or sixth century. Although it contains only the Gospels and Acts, it represents the earliest Greek form of

the Western text used by the Latin Fathers. These are the main sources for a reconstruction of the New Testament text. To them might be added such translations as the Old Syriac, the Peshitta, the Itala, the Coptic, the Vulgate; quotations from the Bible in the writings of the Latin and Greek Fathers; and selections in lectionaries and liturgies.

Here again the work of deciphering, comparing, verifying, amending, has been done by scholars, whose purpose was to recover an approximately accurate text. Their work has been supplemented by archæologists, linguists, littérateurs, students of comparative religion, historians. These invaluable preliminary labors have then been used by translators, so that today the Bible, in whole or in part, speaks in eight hundred and thirty-five languages and dialects to the human family. Presently, every individual on the face of the earth will have the privilege of hearing the message of the Bible in his own tongue.

The scholarly study of manuscripts numbering over two thousand, written in Uncials, or large letters like capitals, and in Minuscules, or Cursives, in the small running hand which dates from about the ninth century, both types varying in quality and merit; the history of the transmission of these

manuscripts under extraordinary circumstances; the sacrifices and heroisms of obscure and well-known students—all this constitutes a romantic story which challenges in importance and interest every other form of literary study. The latest chapter in this unusual story is now being written, occasioned by the discoveries of papyri, ostraca, and inscriptions in the Nile Valley and in Asia Minor.

We are finding out that New Testament Greek was the colloquial speech of the common people, the class to whom the Gospel of Jesus was peculiarly acceptable. This fact brings the New Testament into living linguistic connection with the contemporary world. It affords an approach to our sacred Book from the Imperial Age and from the middle and lower classes of society, and conclusively demonstrates that the New Testament utters the voice of free and gracious religion rather than of fettered and arid theology.[1] Indeed, scholarship has unveiled the true glory of Jesus Christ, by giving a more comprehensive setting to the movement of redemption, which gathered momentum as it traveled throughout the Roman Empire.

There are some who sound the alarm that the

[1] A. Deissmann: *Light from the Ancient East*, pp. 379, 407 (Doran).

Bible has lost its authority because scholars have submitted newer interpretations and different applications of its manifold message. The real difficulty is that what these alarmists thought the Bible should be has no longer any foundation. The only course is to appeal to the testimony of evidence, and to abide by a verdict that is approved by reason, conscience and experience, working in enlightened coöperation.

A distinction should be made between the history of ideas and the history of the literature in which they are embodied. Differences of opinion on questions of authorship and date, and on variations and even contradictions of the text do not necessarily affect the value of the ideas. Their currency proves that they were first propounded by some individuals and then influenced others. The spiritual truths of the Bible testify to the reality of personal experience of persons to whom God spoke, and with whom He dealt in varying degrees of mercy and goodness. It may be of interest to have precise information about the historical circumstances under which this was done, and to be assured of the literary accuracy of the writers. But this is only measurably possible at best.

Is it not more pertinent to know whether God

still speaks to us through the Bible and deals with us in much the same way? Should the records necessarily be historically accurate in every particular before we surrender to their appeal? Does not the fact that the Bible is largely an Oriental book, written according to the methods of picture thinking, invalidate an exclusive interpretation of it according to the methods of conceptual thinking characteristic of the Occident? Are we not doing an injustice to the Book when we fail to discriminate between prose and poetry, between history and fiction, between biography and allegory, between folklore and faith? Are we justified in reading into the earlier portions the conclusions found in the later sections? Do the literalist and the allegorist play fair when they find strained meanings in matter-of-fact statements? Are not attempts to harmonize passages due to a failure to recognize the progressive revelation of God, given at sundry times and in divers manners? Does not the human element, with its limitations and perchance even errors, exalt the wisdom of God in using such an agency to further His gracious plan? Should we not let the Book speak for itself without injecting into it our own prepossessions? Is not the practice of quoting texts at random, without regard to their context, largely responsi-

ble for many vagaries of the religious imagination, such as Christian Science, Theosophy, Spiritualism? It is worth recalling that the dogma of total depravity taught by St. Augustine was based upon five proof texts, three of which were mistranslations. Is this not a reflection on much that passes for Biblical doctrine, which is really a form of baptized paganism?

The Bible is a record of God's self-disclosure given through the experiences of men in many walks of life. It was imparted in connection with the events of war and peace, and under the diversified influences of political, industrial, and social life. In a sense, it might be regarded as the autobiography of the human race, with due regard to the logical stages of infancy, youth, adolescence, and manhood. It is a drama of human life, showing forth its glory when the human responded to the divine, and exhibiting its tragedy when human devices disregarded or ignored the manifest will of God. When viewed as a history there is seen a continuity of thought with a steady progression towards perfection.

All the parts of the Bible hold together because God is the central theme. Its authors were historians, biographers, dramatists, poets, homilists, letter writers, who were impelled by the supreme

purpose of bearing testimony to the guidance and deliverance of a wise and gracious Providence. These writers were not literary purists, following grammatical rules with pedantic conscientiousness. They were men with the flair and fervor of religious concern, who wrote the things as they saw them, in the light of what they regarded as eternal realities. When considered historically, we are profoundly impressed by the patient persistence of God, who would not surrender His plan of redemption, in spite of human violations, insubordinations, and demoralizations. Our Lord's exclamation of pathos strikingly sums up the story of all history: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her own brood under her wings, and ye would not." [2] And yet God continued to pursue His purpose, and finally He excelled all previous undertakings in the gift of His only begotten Son, through whose sacrifice salvation was guaranteed to all mankind. It is this passion of God which is unfolded in the Bible. Through its pages there is seen the vital strain of an unblemished hope in the eventual establishment of the Reign of God, as the glorious consummation of universal blessedness.

[2] Luke 13:34.

This testimony becomes all the more impressive when it is remembered that the Bible is not one man's book, like the Koran of the Mohammedans. It is a library of sixty-six books, written by many men in various styles, but in one temper of devotion. It is not a code of ethical laws and precepts, like the Analects of Confucius, but a witness to the religious aspirations and activities of saintly souls, who found the peace of God in the grim struggles, tantalizing confusions, and severe setbacks of strenuous days. It is not a collection of legendary lore, like the Pitakas and Jatakas of Buddhism, but a selection of representative experiences of religion, in the exacting ordeals of public and private life, which permit of verification by all who understand human nature at its best and at its worst. Even the most superficial comparison with the Scriptures of the world's religions shows that the Bible is superior to every other writing, which speaks authoritatively in the name of Religion.

The Bible is truly the unequaled manual of religious devotion, accepted and endorsed as such by an innumerable company from every age and nation. Its quickening promises of fellowship with God; its varied exhortations for the performance of duty; its many-sided programs for the

guidance of the individual and of society; its opulent offers of redemption for the realization of an immortal destiny—all have been repeatedly verified in the vital experiences of countless multitudes. The essential value of the Bible is in its ability to encourage every individual to enter the sanctuary of personal communion with God and have a vivid sense of the divine presence in the daily round of life. The final test of its inspiration is its lucid understanding of the highest values and its power to impart them to us. It is infallible in the sense that it speaks with cumulative persuasiveness concerning the reality of God's pardon and peace.

Questions of historical reliability, theories of cosmology and anthropology, and other matters of scientific and philosophic interest are not germane to the central emphasis. That relates to the Bible as preëminently the Book of Religion, even of experimental religion. In comparison with this fact other issues are of secondary consequence. The case was well stated by Professor W. Robertson Smith. His testimony is all the more impressive because he was one of the pioneers in espousing the right of free research, in terms of the scientific and the religious consciousness: "If I am asked why I receive Scripture as the

Word of God and as the only perfect rule of faith and life, I answer with all the fathers of the Protestant Church, because the Bible is the only record of the redeeming love of God, because in the Bible alone I find God drawing near to man in Jesus Christ and declaring to us in him his will for our salvation. And this record I know to be true by the witness of his Spirit in my heart, whereby I am assured that none other than God Himself is able to speak such words to my soul." [3]

The official declarations of Councils and Creeds have crystalized the coherent and variable experiences of religious individuals. These pronouncements cannot be regarded as final for all time. They have to be modified or enlarged, with reference to the findings of scholarship, and in harmony with the *consensus fidelium* of the Church, which is a legacy of the past as well as a conviction of the present. This was the principle which guided the Jewish Council of Jamnia, about 90 A. D., in determining the Canon of the Old Testament. The Christian Council of Carthage, 397 A. D., followed the same principle, in deciding upon the Canon of the New Testament. The Roman Catholic Council of Trent, in 1546, en-

[3] "Professor Robertson Smith's Doctrine of Scripture," by T. M. Lindsay in *The Expositor* (London), Fourth Series, Vol. X.

dorsed the judgment of Carthage, but the Protestant Councils modified it by rejecting the Apocrypha and accepting only the Old and New Testaments. Is this principle no longer to guide the Church? Has the illuminating Spirit of God withdrawn His direction since the sixteenth century? Are we passively to accept the conclusions of former days and merely repeat what has been handed down to us? Is the privileged responsibility of Christian freedom which they enjoyed to be denied us? Could our spiritual integrity be sustained with self-respect by an unquestioned reliance upon previous decisions? Has the modern Christian consciousness no testimony to offer in the name of the living Christ? Are we justified in declaring that our conclusions further the steady growth of Truth concerning the life that is hid with Christ in God?

The Old Testament was the Scripture which guided our Lord and enriched his faith. He treated it with the freedom of reverence and not with the servility of superstition. The professional exegetes of his day were dogmatic literalists, who showed ingenuity rather than insight in their interpretation of the sacred oracles. Their mental reservation of preconceived ideas demonstrated their tragic disqualifications, to read the Book with

spiritual and moral sensitiveness to its graciously melioristic declarations for their own day. They were busy answering questions that nobody was asking, and they were dissipating their energies on the curious irrelevancies of an intolerable casuistry. Jesus was surely not harsh when he said: "Ye blind guides, that strain out the gnat and swallow the camel!" [4]

If the scribe had read sympathetically the law of love to God and to one's neighbor, he would have understood its larger bearings. If the Pharisees had appreciated the humanitarianism of the law of the Sabbath, they would have refrained from criticizing the disciples, who plucked ears of corn on this day. The chief priests would have encouraged the Hosannas of the children, instead of wanting to silence them, if they had known the deeper meaning of the words: "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise." Had the Pharisees read the Scriptures historically, instead of wresting passages from their context, they would not have misquoted the sentence: "Out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." A comprehensive reading of Biblical history would have helped the leaders of Jerusalem to understand the oracle, "the stone which the builders

[4] Matt. 23:24.

rejected was made the head of the corner," in its application to the Messiahship of Jesus.[5] Had they compared Scripture with Scripture and read the earlier in the light of the later portions, they would have believed in the continuous process of religious evolution. Their faith would have helped them to see that the Truth was being fulfilled, not by contradiction but by supersession, according to the unfolding and expanding revelation of the redemptive counsels of the God of righteousness and grace.

The purpose of the Old Testament was accepted by the Early Church, as "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely into every good work."[6] St. Paul clearly accepted the permanent value of the Old Testament for Christians in encouraging the virtue of hope: "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope."[7] St. Peter declared concerning prophecy that, "men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit"; but he wisely refrained from any theory

[5] Luke 10:25 ff; Matt. 12:1 ff; Matt. 21:15 ff; John 7:52; Mark 12:10 ff.

[6] II Tim. 3:16. [7] Rom. 15:4.

of inspiration, partly because it was not a moot question.[8]

What variety of landscape, scenery, and human nature is found in its pages! The Oriental background and the references to the nations of antiquity might be regarded as the frame for the picture of human life and relations, molded and influenced by the progressive revelation of God through Lawgivers, Prophets, Psalmists, Priests, and Wise Men. The Old Testament ends on the high note of expectation, looking towards a still greater revelation of the divine will.

We believe that this came with Jesus Christ, and the literary record thereof is found in the New Testament. These writings originated through a series of Providential circumstances. They were produced to meet certain necessities of the Apostolic Church. The Gospels were interpretive reports of the ministry and teaching of Jesus Christ. The Acts illustrates the notable advances of the Church in the first century. The Epistles were addressed by St. Paul and the other apostles to churches, in need of instruction and guidance concerning the Christian life. The preservation and perpetuation of these informal writings testify to their intrinsic worth. No other

[8] II Peter 1:21.

literature compares with them in their ability to plumb the depths of life, and to unveil Jesus Christ as the sole and sufficient Saviour of the race. The New Testament is thus a development and fulfilment of the Old Testament. Both are necessary for a complete comprehension of "the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."[9]

If it were possible for us to read the Bible for the first time, how refreshing would be its effect upon us. Robert Louis Stevenson wrote of St. Matthew's Gospel: "I believe it would startle and move any one if they could make a certain effort of imagination and read it freshly like a book, and not droningly and dully like a portion of the Bible." Read the Book like any other book, and you will find it to be unlike every other book, in its surpassing power to bring us into contact with the springs of abundant life in the God made known through Christ. To be sure, there are some parts more valuable than others. Even experienced readers of the Bible naturally turn more frequently to Genesis and Exodus than to Chronicles, to the Psalms than to Leviticus, to Isaiah and Jeremiah than to Zechariah, to the Gospels than

[9] Eph. 3:11.

to the Epistles, to Acts than to Revelation. One reason for this preference is that the recitals of experience are always more attractive than the interpretations of experience. And yet the latter are also necessary, and even those parts which we overlook are intensely profitable for godly and generous living.

What a wealth of biographical material is found in these pages, and how searching are the portrayals of character. Follow the pioneer Abraham in his migrations, Jacob in his sinister exploits, Joseph in his courageous integrity, Moses in his statesmanship, Joshua the colonizer, Gideon the adventurer, Deborah the patriot, Samson in his defiant misdemeanors, Ruth the charming peasant girl, Samuel the disinterested guide in transition times, Saul the failure, David the heroic king, Jonathan the noble friend, Solomon in his tinsel glory, Elijah the fiery prophet, Isaiah the conciliator, Hezekiah the reconstructionist, Nehemiah the vigorous builder, Esther the heroine, Daniel the man of high principle. Where could you find such a gallery of portraits painted with the finished skill of the literary artist? When you enter the New Testament, the portraits are still more winsome because they are illuminated by

the splendor of Jesus Christ. The sacrificial endurance of the apostles; the passionate loyalty of the men and women, known and unknown, who engaged in the campaigns of the Cross; their noble fidelity in the face of privation and persecution—this is what constitutes the genuine glory of Christianity, as exhibited in the pages of what has been called "the Book of Humanity."

Is there anything outside the Bible that stirs the depths like the Psalms and the doxologies of the Apocalypse; that quickens the imagination like the drama of Job; that nourishes the passion for individual and social righteousness like the writings of Isaiah, Micah, and the other prophets; that stimulates the motives and satisfies the soul like the letters of St. Paul; that holds one spellbound with deepening rapture like the Gospels? Indeed, every conceivable situation in life finds an adequate explanation in the Manifold Book. The informed mind, the disciplined imagination, the growing religious experience of any reader will lead him into the large areas of Truth, which hold unlimited provisions for all our deepest needs. The Bible is not a literature of phrases, requiring cryptic and allegorical interpretations, after the fantastic and bewildering methods of some ex-

pounders. It is the record of a unique history of heroic exploits and consecrated achievements, inspired by the Eternal Spirit, who still bears witness with our spirit, and encourages us to utilize our opulent resources in God.

We are not called upon to defend the Bible. That is superfluous. Besides, many defenses, so named, are far-fetched because they fail to touch upon the central facts, and instead discuss theories of what the Bible should or should not be with reference to values that have no bearing on reality. It is equally futile to praise the Bible as though it needed credentials, when it is perfectly able to stand on its own merits. What is required is for men and women to bear their personal testimony to the ways in which they have been influenced by its sober directions, its urgent exhortations, its timely consolations. What is expected of us is that we use the Bible for the culture of character. Ruskin wrote that the old monks thought the hedgehogs ate grapes by rolling themselves over and over where the grapes lay on the ground. What stuck to their spines they carried off and ate. "So your hedgehoggy readers roll themselves over and over their Bibles, and declare that whatever sticks to their own spines is Scripture; and that nothing else is. But you can

only get the skins of the texts that way. If you want their juice, you must press them in cluster." [10] The question Jesus asked the scribe, "how readest thou?" might well be asked with reference to the whole Bible.[11] If it is read with enlightenment and earnestness, its teachings will animate our purposes, influence our actions, perfect our character, as we "live soberly and righteously and godly." [12]

"Welcome, dear book, soul's Joy and Food! The feast
Of Spirits; Heav'n extracted lyes in thee,
Thou art life's Charter, The Dove's spotless nest
Where souls are hatch'd unto Eternitie.

"In thee the hidden stone, the Manna lyes;
Thou art the great Elixir rare and Choice;
The Key that opens to all Mysteries,
The Word in Characters, God in the Voice." [13]

### For Further Reading

Arthur S. Peake: *The Bible, Its Origin, Its Significance and Its Abiding Worth* (George H. Doran Company).

Harry Emerson Fosdick: *The Modern Use of the Bible* (The Macmillan Company).

Francis J. McConnell: *Understanding the Scriptures* (The Methodist Book Concern).

[10] J. Ruskin: *Ethics of the Dust*, p. 82 (Everyman's Library, Dutton).
[11] Luke 10:26. [12] Titus 2:12. [13] Henry Vaughan.

Arthur S. Peake (Editor): *The People and the Book* (Oxford University Press).

J. E. McFadyen: *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (George H. Doran Company).

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Richard G. Moulton: *The Literary Study of the Bible* (D. C. Heath & Company).

Adolf Deissmann: *Light from the Ancient East.* The New Testament Illustrated by Recently Discovered Texts of the Graeco-Roman World. Revised Edition (George H. Doran Company).

# *Chapter XII: The More Abundant Life*

IT IS a liberal education to be in the company of great souls. They are not usually given to talking much about themselves, and only intimate friends are able to appreciate their real worth. This restraint is largely removed in a biography, especially if it contains a choice selection of letters, which generally give "a subtler likeness of the writer than we can find in the more formal achievements of authorship."[1] The value of a biography depends upon accurate soundings. The depths of personality, its spacious environments, its prolific background, must be considered in any adequate estimate of an individual who merits biographical recognition. The writer should observe the principles of ethical and artistic proportion, so that the portraiture will be neither flattering nor caustic, but impartial. The day of plaster saints has gone, but it is open to question whether we are greatly advantaged when heroes

[1] Sir Walter Raleigh: *On Writing and Writers*, p. 36 (Longmans, Green).

and heroines are brought down from their pedestals and treated merely as common clay. To be sure, they were of like passions with the average run, but they could not have been what they were if not for certain intrinsic qualities which gave them outstanding distinction. This swing of the pendulum from eulogy to criticism is doubtless in the interest of historical accuracy, but it makes for a cynicism which threatens to confiscate all ideals.

The tendency to explain the past by explaining away those factors which made the past significant has been influenced by a type of modern psychology. It relies upon laboratory methods which reach amazing conclusions, and betray "a propensity to grandiloquence and melodrama." Man is surely more than an automaton and the creature of environment. He is made or marred more effectually by the conscious determinations of purposive activity than by the non-conscious influences from the subliminal realm. The weakness of much current psychology is its penchant for theorizing. The result is a veritable babel of voices heard from opposed psychological camps advocating associationism, behaviorism, autosuggestion, mechanism, introspection, experimentalism, psycho-analysis, faculty psychology. Even the elect are confused by such terms as libido, neurosis, com-

plexes, sublimation, projection, segregation, repression, nymphomania, not because they are technical, but on account of their arbitrary use by psychologists who discard the dictionary and violate all canons of language.

The confusion is to be lamented, for disagreements in one field invariably react damagingly upon every other field of thought. And yet psychology cannot be discounted. It has made religion interesting "as a subject of inquiry and a topic of discourse," although, as Principal L. P. Jacks adds, "it is not making any of us more religious." It has clarified some religious ideas and magnified the marvel of personality. If psychologists had realized that their methods of dealing with the validity of religious experience virtually challenge or deny that validity, they might have known that their course was unscientific. Psychology as such cannot do justice to the validity of knowledge or of religion.[2] Attempts to explain religious experience by hypnosis, suggestion, epilepsy, and the like ignore values and motives. It is only a wool-gathering psychology which finds the roots of human nature in the soil or rather in the dunghill.

[2] *Cf.* William Brown on "Religion and Psychology" in *Science, Religion and Reality*, p. 309 ff (Macmillan).

We have seen in previous chapters that religion is the most absorbing pursuit of mankind, and that the testimony of religious experience, since it is first-hand, has legitimate authority. We may discard the theory of religious instinct, as understood by faculty psychology, which fails to recognize that religion involves all the interests of life. But we cannot minimize the fact that it is deep-seated in human history. It gives evidence of man's eternal hunger, which impels him to seek and find the God Who implanted it in him. St. John's classical sentence, "We love because he first loved us," is reflected in Pascal's sentiment, "we would not seek Thee hadst Thou not already found us." The ultimate Reality is infinite Goodness, Truth, and Beauty, perfectly incarnated in Jesus Christ. Its full significance cannot be given by the psychologist, purely as a disinterested outsider. That would be as reliable as an exposition of Beethoven's sonatas written by a deaf-mute. The acceptable word comes from the religionist, who speaks from a personal experience, which is confirmed by the like experience of others concerning the more abundant life in Christ. If he is a psychologist, philosopher or theologian, so much the better. But in any case his testimony must be endorsed by deeds.

The statement that religion is the secret of true character is challenged. It is pointed out that religion has been a breakwater against the storms of passion, as much as a barrier in the way of human advance. It has fortified some individuals and depleted the energies of others. It has sown the seeds of unity as well as the dragon's teeth of discord. Its history is a recital of sublime and of sinister efforts. The pages of its record glow with the golden deeds of goodness and heroism, but they are also darkened by cruelties and crimes. Virtue and vice appear on either side of its shield. Amazing sacrifices have been made in its name, like those of the Hindu pilgrim who undertook a journey of a thousand miles, not by walking but by measuring herself in prostrations along the road, in order that she might get a vision of God in a shrine in the Himalayas. Incredible physical tortures are endured with fortitude by others, like the Mussulman sect at Kairwan near Tunis, graphically described by Marquess Curzon in his *Tales of Travel*. The history of Christian monasticism records painful exhibitions of anchorites who forsook the world in search of religious excellence. On the other hand, there are religious people whose practices do not grate upon our sensibilities. Their sincerity is marked by quiet fidel-

ity in the performance of duties, and life is made saner and sweeter for themselves and others. Their wholesome endeavors show that their religion is not of the twilight but has a mellow radiance. They take the path of rectitude rather than the line of least resistance.

These contrasts are not explained by the theory of true and false religions. Viscount Morley well declared that, "Religion has many dialects, many divers complexions, but it has one true voice, the voice of human pity, of mercy, of patient justice." In another connection, he quoted Daniel O'Connell, the brilliant Irish leader of a former day, who spoke discerningly when he said: "Every religion is good, every religion is true to him who in his due caution and conscience believes it. There is but one bad religion, that of a man who professes a faith which he does not believe; but the good religion may be, and often is, corrupted by the wretched and wicked prejudices which admit a difference of opinion as a cause of hatred." [3]

The versatile virtue of religion can never be called in question, except as a reminder that there are imperfect and more nearly perfect religions. What is justifiably criticized is the tragic breakdown of religion through the betrayals of its fol-

[3] Viscount Morley: *Recollections*, Vol. I, pp. 189, 248 (Macmillan).

lowers. The gap between profession and practice has always existed, but this does not warrant its continuance nor should it give the impression that it cannot be bridged. This enigma is partly explained by a false idea of God, which appeals to convenience rather than to conscience. The Hebrew prophets scathingly exposed the inexcusable heresy of those religious people of their day, who "neither worshipped a real God, nor worshipped with their real selves."[4] Our Lord was outspoken in his indictments of those who make a cloak of religion, whom he compared to "whited sepulchers which outwardly appear beautiful but inwardly are full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness." He also declared that it was logically and morally absurd to expect a corrupt tree to bring forth good fruit.[5]

The reality of religion is not demonstrated by argument but by action. Pascal set this issue forcibly: "The heart has reasons which reason does not know. There are truths that are felt and there are truths that are proved; for we know truth not only by reason, but by the intuitive conviction which may be called the heart." This is in harmony with the words of Jesus, that "the

[4] John Skinner: *Prophecy and Religion*, Studies in the Life of Jeremiah, p. 71 (Macmillan).

[5] Matt. 23:27; 7:18.

pure in heart shall see God." The clear vision comes only to the clean life, which is qualified to test genuine values and to appreciate true motives. Our Lord severely condemned the inner falsehoods of a perverted will, which blind the vision and paralyze the ability for virtuous deeds. It is the distinction between one who takes his religion seriously and the other who treats it in a dilettante fashion.

We are accustomed to think of religion as restricted to the exercises of penitence, prayer, and thanksgiving. These are its central inspirations, but the range of its influence is coextensive with all life. The intellectual and emotional, the ethical and artistic, the literary and social, the commercial and recreational, belong to the warp and woof of life. They also come within the circle of religion, which works through them all for the realization of spiritual ends. Indeed, religion is not apart from life nor is it a part of life; it is the whole of life at its best. The distinguishing mark of the religious life is the consciousness of the divine presence whereby we enjoy the open mind, the hopeful outlook, the generous disposition. Religion without thought is superstition. Religion without emotion is speculation. Religion without will is an abstraction. A complete re-

ligion reckons with the differing influences of temperament, tradition, and training. Its purpose is not to repress but to release the possibilities of personality by renewing and reinforcing them. Its mission is not self-mutilation but self-transformation for the ennoblement and enlargement of life. It is opposed to what J. St. Loe Strachey calls the three idolatries—ritual, dogma, and exclusiveness. Forms change, methods vary, problems differ from age to age, but character abides and it matures in the measure of its response to the ideal of perfection.

Christianity meets these requirements better than any other religion. It has to its credit a larger number of representative persons of a variety of gifts and graces, who are found in many groups. In spite of divisive differences, they are agreed on the essential realities, which in the final analysis are of greater consequence than sectional and denominational rivalries. This fact is being increasingly recognized, and the courage of faith is asserting itself on behalf of Christian unity. The demonstration at the Lausanne Conference is an earnest of what may be expected in the not distant future.[6] Churchmen and sectarians, Romanists

[6] *Cf. Faith and Order.* Proceedings of the World Conference. Edited by H. N. Bate (Doran).

and Protestants, ecclesiastics and reformers, are slowly learning that the final test is spiritual inclusiveness. All who are in sympathy with the redemptive purpose of Jesus Christ, all who experience union with him, all who live in obedience to him, have a place of welcome in his fellowship. Why then should they be excluded from the association of his followers? Is the aristocracy of intellect greater than that of character? Is likemindedness more important than likeheartedness? Are the historic creeds to be regarded as final pronouncements, or are they the convictions of the times when they were given? Do we necessarily discount them when they are adapted to the mental and spiritual changes of our own day? Does faith in Christ mean the acceptance of previous verdicts about him, or is it the surrender of the life to the control of his Spirit? Should precise modes of ritual determine the acceptability of our worship of God? Is ecclesiastical conformity as imperative as spiritual kinship? Are we indulging in captious casuistry when we insist on agreements in language? Do we divide the Church when we rebel against the rigid tests of institutional sacerdotalism, and prefer the elastic freedom of sacramentalism as the channel for the

conveyance of the divine grace? In short, is Christianity the utterance of truths or is it a way of life that leads to the equable calm of God's pardon, purity, and peace?

These questions permit of several answers. In a large sense the "Either-Or" method of choice is inadequate. Why not view the situation synthetically, so as to relieve the tension between opposing groups and liberate the energies for a spiritual catholicism? Our Lord disarmed prejudice and removed misunderstanding by showing that his mission was not to destroy but to fulfil, not to undermine but to establish, not to sidestep but to include, not to compromise but to complete. His question "What do ye more?" implied that his disciples were to manifest an excess of fervor and faithfulness, a fulness to overflowing of goodness and bounty, an abundance of genial magnanimity and patient generosity. There is nothing stunted or penurious in the Christian life, when the higher toned love of Christ is the motive and the power. The Christian's creed is credible when his life is attractive.

"The New Testament is unique in spiritual value because it so constantly keeps above the level of religious ideas which ordinary men and ordinary

ages could imagine for themselves."[7] The same is true of the New Testament experience which has been repeatedly reproduced. It carries its own credentials, which give tangible evidence that it is more choice, more exquisite, more gratifying, more commensurable than any other type of religious experience. Its many-sidedness is clearly brought out in the New Testament. This volume definitely makes room for the ethical emphasis of the Sermon on the Mount, for the evangelical grace of the Pauline Epistles, for the intellectual clarity of the Epistle to the Hebrews, for the mystical glow of the Johannine writings. And yet these distinctions are not exclusive, for they all reflect the matchless fulness of the White Christ of our redemption.

St. Paul bore convincing testimony to the more abundant life in words of flashing illumination. "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me; and that life which I now live in the flesh, I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me."[8] His direct relationship with Christ gave him an experience of redemption, which found expression in a

[7] Alexander Nairne: *The Faith of the New Testament*, p. 219 (Longmans, Green).

[8] Gal. 2:20.

holy and hearty life. It bore the nourishing fruit of the Spirit of Christ—"love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control."[9] This is not surprising for on his own showing his life was Christ-absorbed, Christ-inspired, Christ-identified, Christ-realized. Therefore, it followed that in his case deed accorded with thought and conduct harmonized with confession.

Such a test of Christianity as a living and growing spirit, and manifesting its reality in the routine of daily activities, has been its glory during the centuries. It still continues to be so, in spite of the frequent charge that the ideals of Christianity are honored and neglected, that they are revered but not realized. Subnormal Christians, whose religion is an inheritance rather than an acquirement, sit lightly to the privileges and demands of their faith. There are also normal Christians in all the churches, who can give a good account of themselves without apologizing for inconsistencies. Then again there are exceptional Christians, who live nearer the center of Eternal Light, and who reflect its permeating power:

"In deeds of daring rectitude,
In scorn for miserable aims that end with self,

[9] Gal. 5:22.

In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars,
And with their mild persistence
Urge men's lives to vaster issues."

It has already been shown that a religion is to be judged by its best, and not by its worst, adherents. The present vitality and versatility of Christianity can be demonstrated by this reliable standard. Consider some recent witnesses. Father Damien labored for fifteen years on the leper island of Molokai, where he went of his own free will and accord, to minister to "the butt ends of humanity" in the name of Christ. Robert Louis Stevenson wrote of him: "He shut to with his own hand the door of his own sepulcher." We do not think of him as a Roman Catholic, but as one who illustrated the Spirit of Christ by sacrificial service. Canon Barnett of Toynbee Hall, gave himself to strenuous toil among the destitute people of London, having as his motto, "The best for the lowest." We ignore the fact that he was an Episcopalian, as we think of his work in remaking men and women after the pattern of Christ. Dr. W. P. Torrance of Tiberias, better known as "the Galilean Doctor," ministered for thirty-nine years, as physician and missionary, on the shore of the Lake of Galilee among Jews, Moslems, and others in the midst of volcanic,

social, political, and religious conditions. We think of him not as a Presbyterian, but as one who incarnated the Christ Spirit in his effective ministry. William Booth organized the Salvation Army for the sake of a more aggressive campaign for Christ. His "corybantic Christianity" was condemned by the churches, but he and his earnest followers have been instrumental in bringing thousands to the Saviour. Who cares about methods, so long as the motives of the Salvationists have stimulated them to seek and to save the lost with Christ's enthusiasm of humanity? Dwight L. Moody stirred the English-speaking world by his evangelistic labors, which for sanity and sanctity have been unparalleled in the history of the Church. We do not think of him as a Congregationalist, but as a broad-minded and large-hearted Christian, whose straightforward appeals and common-sense ways enabled him to bring God to man and man to God, on a magnificent scale of spiritual efficiency. Hugh Price Hughes was a vigorous and fearless advocate of Social Christianity in the West End of London, and he made "the Nonconformist conscience" a force for righteousness in the public and private life of England. We do not think less of him as a Methodist, but more of him as an irrepressible Christian, whose faith

and loyalty were expressed in the words, "Thou, O Christ, art all I want."

What shall be said of the glorious company of Christian women, of Florence Nightingale, Susan B. Anthony, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Frances Willard, Catherine Booth, Isabella Thoburn, Josephine Butler, Alice Freeman Palmer, Mary Slessor, Elsie Inglis, Lady Henry Somerset, Pandita Ramabai, Madeleine Sémer, Mabel Cratty? Indeed, the company of these elect souls is far too numerous to mention. It would be superfluous to refer to their church affiliations, where the more important question of their practical Christianity is satisfactorily answered. It should also be mentioned that these eminent leaders could not have accomplished their mission, without the consecrated coöperation of a multitude of devoted souls, unknown to fame but well known by those to whom they ministered in Christ's sweet name and charity.

So long as we are not disembodied spirits, it is absurd to suppose that there should of necessity be a conflict between the idealist, who holds before us the standards of perfection, and the materialist, who insists that conditions should be improved, if these standards are not to be merely the provoking gestures of visionaries. Our Lord held the balance

between these two types, when he preached the sublime ethic of the Kingdom of God and made it practicable, not only by furnishing the spiritual dynamic but also by alleviating, the social distress of the multitudes.

It is only the short-sighted who refuse to acknowledge that earnest and sincere Christian men and women are seriously endeavoring to understand and to remove the disparities and difficulties for the sake of a better manhood, womanhood, and childhood. Such recent volumes as *Business and the Church* and *Christianity and Social Adventuring*, both edited by Jerome Davis, reflect a current sober purpose to make more of the real values of the Christian Faith in education, industry, philanthropy, and other humane undertakings. On the other hand, there is a situation which cannot be ignored. "The ominous fact confronts the modern world that a very large proportion, not only of frivolous and superficial people, but also of serious and cultivated minds, have simply dropped the motive of religion from among their habitual resources, and are supported in their experiences by sanctions and consolations derived from science or art, from work or play." Among the causes are "the superfluous refinements

of Christian theology and the unreal distinctions of Christian ethics." [10]

The solution is by no means easy. The magnetic personality and irresistible originality of our Lord constitute him the supreme ethical teacher. He aimed to create in his followers a new will, showing piety towards God and purity towards man. But the application of this enlightened will in a complex society is not so simple a matter as an offhand judgment would conclude. Think of the questions that agitate our day, such as the benefits of prohibition, the merits of war and peace, the rights of race and color, the duties of capital and labor, the obligations of nationalism and internationalism. We cannot dismiss with a wave of the hand the agelong influences of custom, tradition, and patriotism, which have molded religious conceptions and practices.

Think of the misleadings of conscience, due to insufficient knowledge and to misunderstandings. St. Paul was sincere but mistaken during his pre-Christian days, as he acknowledged with chagrin: "I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." [11] Are there not Christians who, if

[10] Francis G. Peabody: *The Christian Life in the Modern World*, p. 20 (Macmillan).

[11] Acts 26:9.

they knew all the facts about certain courses of action, would be constrained to make a similar confession? Would they not refrain from negations and denunciations, if they were familiar with the other side? Are we justified in giving them credit for sincerity but not for intelligence, when they refuse to reconsider, because they are convinced by what to them is authoritative endorsement? Can such a verdict be sustained in consonance with Christian courtesy and patience? Have we correctly understood the exhortation of St. Paul about the weak brother, who may be strong because of self-will and obstinacy rather than of informed sensitiveness? [12] Is there not much confusion owing to the contradictory interpretations of the Sermon on the Mount, by those who take it literally and by others who would tone it down or compromise its demands?

It is clear that no ready-made program is feasible in a world of shifting conditions, social differences, religious changes. The question is how to conserve the permanent element, by giving it a setting in an age of tantalizing paradoxes, demanding new measures. The problem is how to modify or transform the customs and conventions of society, in accord with the eternal law of

[12] *Cf.* I Cor. 8:1 ff.

righteousness; how to conciliate the austere Puritan and the humanistic Pagan; how to effect a synthesis, with idealism and materialism as the two antitheses; how to overcome the skepticism of ignorance and the cynicism of indifference; how to establish a rational faith in the moral order of the universe and in the ultimate triumph of divine and human love. Agencies for redemption are well enough, but they are simply marking time, unless they show ability and adaptability in producing the results of redemption. "By their fruits ye shall know them"—that is the acid test.[13]

The Christian life holds in solution every problem because it is governed by the redemptive principle of love in Jesus Christ. This love is not a species of pity, which is often a mark of senile weakness and of moral anæmia. It is an attitude of comprehension, which distinguishes between sympathy and sentimentalism, between forgiveness and the condoning of wrong-doing, between charity and mere good-nature. It is the practice of humanity which has regard for justice for the sake of pan-humanism. It insists on a discerning discipline which demands equity and dignity, morality and spirituality, to further the Kingdom of God among all men and nations. Its

[13] Matt. 7:20.

enlightened altruistic spirit towards the life of the individual and of society is in accord with the apostolic exhortation: "Each with an eye to the interests of others as well as to his own." [14]

Is this too much to expect of Christians? The life that is hid with Christ in God is capable of unlimited achievements because it has access to inexhaustible riches of moral and spiritual power.[15] It should, therefore, let its light shine that the rays may bring healing and health to many, and finally to all. Jesus Christ is the Lord of human life and destiny. When his impartial and sacrificial spirit is courageously and consistently exhibited by his followers, then chaos will yield to order, and the prayer be answered: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

"No mystic voices from the heavens above
Now satisfy the souls which Christ confess;
Their heavenly vision is in works of love,
A new age summons to new saintliness.
Before the uncloistered shrine of human needs
And all unconscious of the worth or price,
They lay their fragrant gifts of gracious deeds
Upon the altar of self-sacrifice." [16]

[14] Phil. 2:4 (Moffatt).
[15] *Cf.* Phil. 4:13, 19.
[16] Francis G. Peabody: *The Christian Life in the Modern World*, p. v (Macmillan).

## For Further Reading

Francis G. Peabody: *The Christian Life in the Modern World* (The Macmillan Company).

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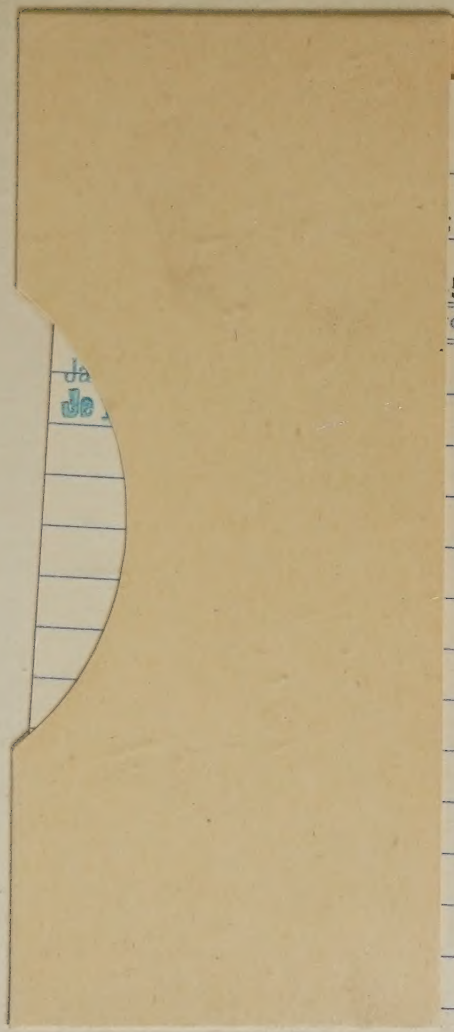
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